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a novel
by W.B. HOCKLEY

(first ed. was in 1826)

PANDURANG HÀRÌ.

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"It is easy to exaggerate the merits of a favourite book, and 'Pandurang Hari' is the interpreter to me of fitful recollections of my earliest childhood—faces and figures seen at Holkar's capital, and when a playmate of the Begum of Bhopal—attacks by Bheels and murderous village quarrels in Malwa—thirty-five years ago, and remembered but darkly now. But if 'Haji Baba' has been justly called the 'Gil Blas' of the East, Pandurang Hari may be called, with the strictest propriety, the Anastasius of India. It is not indeed a creation of genius like Anastasius. It is without invention, passion, humour—it is wanting in artistic style and skill even, and its hero is as weak and despicable as he is wicked, and not the fascinating sinner the impenitent Anastasius is; but in the startling vicissitudes of his career it unfolds the whole social, political, and religious life of the Mahrattas—when at their lowest fortunes and deepest degradation; and the author's very incapacity for creative authorship, and want of artistic power and common skill as a writer, impresses one all the more with the conviction of the almost photographic faithfulness of his story to the times it describes. This is the claim of Pandurang Hari to be kept from being forgotten. India is being transformed with magical rapidity,—'Behold, I make all things new.' An old missionary of the London Missionary Society, once speaking to me of the discouragements attending missionary work in India, observed—'But when I look back to forty years ago, and compare India (Western India) then, with what it now is,' the change seems incredible even to me; and I can account for it only, as the direct work'—I am quoting *his* words—'of the Spirit.' But in urging you to reprint Pandurang Hari, I must tell you frankly that it has been already refused by several other publishers."—*Dr Birdwood, in a letter to Mr Henry S. King*, 1871.

"An obscure three volume novel . . . . by an anonymous author, named 'Pandurang Hari' . . . . A most accurate and vivid picture of Mahratta life. We wish that Captain Meadows Taylor would look after 'Pandurang Hari,' and see if it would not be worth reprinting."—*Pall Mall Gazette, May* 21, 1869.

"A history which is a series of the wildest romances, out of which half a dozen historical novels might be constructed, such as the authors of 'Pandurang Hari,' and 'Tara' wrote for the delight of their day and generation."—*Athenæum, December* 2, 1871.

[Hockley, William Browne]

PANDURANG HÀRÌ,

OR,

MEMOIRS OF A HINDOO.

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY PREFACE BY

SIR H. BARTLE E. FRERE,

G.C.S.I., K.C.B., D.C.L.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
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INTRODUCTION.

I HAVE been asked to write a short introduction, giving some of the reasons why I think the re-publication of this almost forgotten novel desirable at this present time. When "Pandurang Hàrì" was first published, nearly a half century ago, the book was received as a late and authentic picture of Native Indian society. I well remember my gratitude to a friend who recommended it to me, with "Haji Baba" and the "Kuzzilbash," as the only books he could find which gave any idea of what would now be called the inner life of Orientals. The works of Morier and Fraser have long since secured a permanent place in Anglo-oriental literature; but "Pandurang Hàrì" has been so completely forgotten, that when Dr George Birdwood recommended its republication, the publishers were indebted to the liberality of Lord Talbot de Malahide, for one of the few copies of the book which could be traced by Captain Meadows Taylor in any library, with which he was acquainted, in the United Kingdom. This neglect was not entirely due to compara-

tive inferiority in literary merit. It is true that "Pandurang Hàrì" has no pretensions to the artistic skill and delicate sense of humour, by means of which Mr James Morier made the Persian adventurer a permanent favourite with all English readers. Pandurang himself can hardly be regarded in any sense as an interesting hero, and there are defects in the plot of the book, and in the slovenly execution of many details, which would interfere with its popularity as a mere novel. It possesses, however, merits of a very rare kind as a series of photographic pictures from the past generations of a great Indian nation. Its value in this respect would doubtless have been more permanently recognised, but for the circumstance that the pictures were, for the most part, taken from scenes of which Anglo-Indians in general had seen and heard but little. To most men who knew India in the Bengal or Madras Presidencies forty years ago, sketches from the life of a Maharatta adventurer could convey no true picture of Indian life and manners; but there are probably a few whose recollections belong to the Deccan or Malwa, and reach so far back as to include personal acquaintance with actors in the last Maharatta war, who will not fail to recognise, in the adventures of Pandurang, the general features of a mode of life and habits of thought, such as the Maharatta associates of their early days in Poona, Indore, or Hyderabad, delighted to dwell on. I had many opportunities of meeting men of this class in 1835 and subsequent years in the Deccan, and

I can testify that there are very few of the scenes or stories contained in Pandurang's narrative, to which I could not find a parallel among the reminiscences I have heard related by old men, whose youth had been passed in Maharatta and Pindari courts or camps during the first twenty years of this century. But a traveller who might now visit, for the first time, the provinces in which the scene of the novel is laid, would meet little to remind him of Pandurang's adventures, or of such characters as he describes. I am convinced, from my own recollections of what I heard when I first knew the Deccan, that Pandurang's descriptions are remarkably faithful sketches of the time when the story was laid; and it is this fact which is one reason for my opinion that the re-publication of the old novel now will be of use to thoughtful Englishmen, as well as Hindoos, who interest themselves with questions relating to the progress, social, political, and moral, of Indian nations in modern times. The pictures drawn by Pandurang are by no means flattering or pleasing—they describe a state of society so hideously disorganised, and of morals so base, that they seem incredible as related of a period so near to our own, in which they would at once be condemned as enormously exaggerated or entirely untrue. If then Pandurang's pictures be, as I believe them to be, substantially correct representations of the state of things in those provinces only two generations ago, it is clear that the country and people to which they relate, possess enormous inherent power of reco-

vering from a state of debasement which would shock any educated native at the present moment. A knowledge of the greatness as well as the rapidity of the change which has taken place, may inspire fresh hope in those who are sanguine regarding the future progress of native society, while the same facts may moderate the self-satisfaction of some of our young native friends, who, not having any personal knowledge of the depth of degradation to which society had sunk during previous generations of anarchy and misrule, are apt to believe intelligent foreigners' estimate of their country and people to be tinged with prejudice or clouded by ignorance.

While, however, I can testify to the general truthfulness of Pandurang's sketching powers, I would by no means assent to his general estimate of Maharatta character. The author appears to have been a keen-sighted, quick-witted man, who readily apprehended the leading characteristics of what he saw and heard; but who shared, with the great majority of his official countrymen, in the difficulty of arriving at impartial opinions regarding the motives and feelings of his native associates.

The Introduction is characteristic of the manner in which but too many of our countrymen have always judged the natives of India. It never seems to strike the author, that the irksomeness to Europeans of the society of natives of India, may be as much due to our ignorance of what interests our native visitors, as to their ignorance of what interests us, and that, without some common topics of real

interest to both parties, there can, in no country, be much pleasure in casual conversation.

His description of the motives of those natives who visit the European official in India, has no doubt some foundation of truth in every part of the world, as regards those who seek the acquaintance of men in power, and of those who are the dispensers of patronage.

In India, where for generations anything like purity in the administration of justice or the distribution of patronage, had almost ceased to be expected by either the rulers or their subjects, the author's estimate of the motives which drew visitors to the doors of official men in India fifty years ago, might be expected to be peculiarly applicable. Yet even there, the author admits that he found one bright exception to the sweeping condemnation which he passes on the general mass of his native acquaintance; and it is observable that, however severe may be the judgments pronounced by European critics on their native associates in India, the critic, if a man of any experience or real power of observation, rarely fails to check his condemnation of native society in general by describing "the only honest native, sir, I ever knew," or in some other form testifying to exceptions, which, even granting them to be as rare as such critics imagine, would suffice to prove that whatever the causes of presumed general depravity, the incapacity of the race for good was certainly not absolute nor universal.

PANDURANG HÀRÌ.

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in his last despairing efforts to retrieve his master's falling fortunes.

Again, except to a few adventurers, bear-hunters, or district police-officers, the robber's cave is probably now as obsolete in India as it is in England, or any other country where it has been relegated to the theatrical properties of melodramatic managers. But long after peace and uniform Government had been restored to the Deccan, genuine robber's caves, such as are described by Pandurang, were to be found in many remote districts. Some of the old Bhuddist cave temples, which are scattered so plentifully along the whole range of the Western Ghauts, were used as robber retreats to within a comparatively recent period, and thirty years ago robber-caves might have been found within a walk or ride of the now fashionable sanitarium of Mahabuleshwar, close to roads now frequented by English nurses and their infantile charges, and within sight of plantations of chincona plants brought from the Andes by Mr Clements Markham.

One such cave in the laterite rock, overlooking the ancient road from Waee to the sacred sources of the Krishna and its sister rivers, just where the road branches to the fortress of Pretabghur and to the sea-port of Mhar, though now in the heart of the hill station, was pointed out to me some years ago by one of the elders of the Gaolees (hill herdsmen), as the place where, in his father's time, a robber band, with which the poor hill herdsmen dared not meddle,

used to watch for pilgrims, merchants, or stray soldiers, and to pounce on any convoy which appeared, as viewed from their eagle's nest, to be incapable of resistance. The cave was spacious, well furnished with fireplaces and platforms for sleeping—and rude cupboard-like recesses; and could have comfortably sheltered fifty men unobserved, within watching distance of the ancient track over the hills. Similar caves are found in many parts of the same laterite range, which bounds the well wooded and beautiful valley of the Koina, between Mahabuleshwar and the Chiploon Ghaut; and some of them as late as 1846, when the valley was still one of the most secluded in the Deccan, afforded permanent refuge, not often to active robbers, but to fugitives of society, who found in their recesses the shelter denied to them in more populous districts. Three or four such solitary outlaws, possibly the last of their kind, were coaxed into Satara by the head man of one of the little forest villages, and furnished with a safe conduct from the Resident, securing them from molestation so long as they obeyed the law. All of these poor creatures had the quick observant glance, the attentive ear, and more or less the general air of wild animals rather than of men. One of them, who told me he believed he had lived in these rocky fastnesses for fourteen years, had fled from his home after slaying a man in a fit of jealousy; he described his life as one of almost unendurable suffering and privation, dependent for all necessaries of life (beyond what the roots and berries of the jungle afforded), on

the precarious hospitality of the poor villages scattered along the banks of the river in the narrow valley. The villagers, partly probably from fear partly from compassion, never denounced him, and at harvest time always left small offerings of grain, or a cast-off blanket, or pair of sandals within his reach; but they rarely noticed or spoke to him, and treated him much as one possessed by some evil spirit, whom they hardly dared to aid, still less to drive away. Occasionally a shooting party, in search of bears or sambur deer, would fill him with terror, as he watched them from the rocks overhanging the valley; but the native beaters made a point of not noticing him, and he had never, till I saw him, confronted a white man close enough to speak to him. Forty years earlier I have no doubt these same rocks would have afforded refuge to such robbers as Pandurang describes; and all the skirts of the Ghauts, and the Vindya and Santroora ranges, doubtless abound in similar valleys possessed of similar robber-strongholds.

Of detached pictures, such as might have been seen in the Deccan sixty years ago, and of stories such as might have been heard round the village peple-tree of an evening twenty years later, I have met no book which gives so vivid an idea as this almost forgotten and inartistic novel. The "Confessions of a Thug" incidentally refer to some of the social deformities of the same age; but it relates merely to one class of criminal society, and that class limited in numbers, though not in range. The same graphic hand has drawn in

"Tara," a charming picture of some of the most beautiful scenery and pleasing features of native life in the Deccan; but for a truthful picture of Maharatta life, as it must have appeared in the later and more corrupt days of the Peishwa's government, I have met with nothing equal to the dark bizarre sketches of "Pandurang Hàrì."

Of the author, Mr Hockley, I have been able to learn little beyond the fact that he belonged to the Bombay Civil Service, and served under the Commissioners in the Deccan, and in the Judge's Court at Broach. He fell under a cloud and left the service, and of his subsequent career I have been able to trace nothing. When I was first at Poona many stories were current of the practical and other jokes, with which he exercised the patience of the older and steadier officers in the Deccan Commission; but this novel, which was published by Whitaker in 1826, is the only production of his pen which I have met with, and I have not even been able to verify the date of his death. No alteration has been attempted in the orthography of proper names —it is not uniform, or in accordance with any regular system; but is sufficiently consistent to satisfy the general reader, while any attempt to make it conform to more accurate transliteration would have involved other changes for which there is no sufficient warrant. It is obvious, for instance, that some of the names could not have belonged to persons of the caste to which they are attributed; it is useless to attempt correcting them, and the reader must kindly take

them, like the impossible names in old translations of the Arabian Nights, as belonging to the author's creation, and not to the age or people of which he wrote.

The modes of address, moreover, are of an English rather than native fashion, but to have carried out a correct translation of native expressions, would have involved alterations in style not justifiable in a reprint.

H. B. E. FRERE.

Wressil Lodge, Wimbledon, 1872.

INTRODUCTION TO ORIGINAL EDITION.

NOTHING can be more irksome to the European than the society of the inhabitant of Hindustan. His conversation is monotonous, and little calculated to relieve the tedium caused by that enervating indolence, which, in a tropical climate, overpowers the European, and is also a marked portion of the native character. If a native visit you, his call is not that of friendship, but always has some interested motive at bottom, or the hope of obtaining some personal benefit. The learning, talent, and virtue which a European may possess, are no objects of attraction with him, they are of no value in his eyes; and the crowd of natives who may flock around his door are drawn thither by the charm of his power, as agent of the Government, as Resident, collector, or judge. If they do not expect, through his means, to obtain some insignificant situation that they may turn to profit, the very circumstance of his admission of them as visitants gives them considerable consequence in the eyes of their countrymen, of which

they do not fail to take advantage. Where the will of the ruler is regarded as law (which, from time immemorial, has been the case in the East), power is the great idol of adulation; to live in its shadow confers influence; its smiles are equivalent to the satisfaction of no very limited ambition; and this holds good, in its degree, as far as regards the lowest officer of the ruling authority. Such is a distinguishing feature of the natives of India, and of the Mahrattas more especially; and the characteristic is noticed here, in order to mark an exception to the general rule.

The editor of this work, in travelling through the Deccan, had the singular good fortune to meet with a native who possessed but little of the selfish character of his countrymen. His visits were disinterested in every respect, and they were uniformly met with that pleasure, which, in European society, is always exhibited upon the reception of a generous friend. In his conversation there was nothing like deceit; for, ill resembling the generality of his countrymen, he left his mask at home. There was no affected humility in his manner, no servile and flattering epithets, so disgusting to European minds of any strength: he was, in short, the best specimen of the native character the editor ever saw; and his society was a thing of value, in proportion to its extraordinary rarity in that part of the world. The name of this native was Nanna, of the family of the individual of that name mentioned hereafter as the friend of Pandurang Hàrì. In the conversations which frequently

took place—conversations which will be remembered to the last hour of life with pleasure—more knowledge of the people of Hindustan was gleaned than could have been acquired by the longest residence in the country, in the character of a simple observer. Speaking one day of the governments of India, and of the number of small states into which it was and is divided, my friend mentioned that the succession to the sovereignty was often a subject of quarrel and bloodshed. Usurpers, persons of the reigning family, and claimants distantly related to a defunct sovereign, by their disputes, had occasioned much unhappiness to the people. Just claims had been made by individuals whose lives were spent in the lowest occupations in search of subsistence, or who had been driven into concealment and obscurity to secure their own existence; the reigning despot endeavouring to keep down all claimants to the throne, or one of them endeavouring to persecute to destruction another who might be nearer than himself to a musnud of which the speedy vacation was expected.

One day this native friend put into the editor's hand a MS., written in the Mahratta tongue, saying, "As you wish to be acquainted with some of the adventures of the better class of natives, and with the Mahratta character in particular, this will enable you to form your own opinion, and show them as they are. You will discover the shifts and modes of subsistence which even the higher castes maybe driven to adopt, and the strange vicissitudes of life often

occurring in a country where everything depends upon the will of superiors in power—where, except in religious observances and customs, there is a constant change, and the rajah of to-day may be the ryot of to-morrow."

After perusing the MS. of his friend, the editor thought a free translation of it into his own language would not be uninteresting to his countrymen; he therefore set about the task, in doing which he has tried to render the language as simple and unpretending as the original, and to give the story as he received it, neither clothed in picturesque local description, nor heated by passion, beyond that which the languid temperament of the Hindoo will sanction; for even love with him is little more, if anything, than a blind instinct. The reader must not, therefore, expect to revel in scenes of heroic or chivalric adventure; but to peruse the history of a distinguished native individual, in its *vraisemblance* and characteristic simplicity.

To render the work as intelligible and clear as possible, advantage has been taken of an editor's license, and alterations have been made (but only such as appeared absolutely necessary) to anglicise the narrative. Some of the editor's Indian friends will be able to confirm the truth of many of the leading details, because they must discover allusions to real facts, which have taken place, to their own knowledge, in our Eastern empire.

The editor is aware that a description of the Asiatic character has been before now given to the public, and he has

seen the observations of travellers upon it. He knows that the secluded Brahmin has been regarded by the hasty visitant with admiration, and does not, therefore, marvel at the warmth of colouring in which it has been often the fashion to clothe his quiet, and, therefore, as supposed, devoted and virtuous character. It is with astonishment, however, that he has known persons, long resident in India, employ their pens in the same manner; and he wonders how men of talent can have resided years among this people, and have been so completely duped by plausibilities. Perhaps they never were at the pains to penetrate beyond the mere external picture, and judged of the truth by the appearance. Hindoo simplicity of character has been praised, and the virtue of the women held up as a model to the world (not regarding its powerful protection under a reign of castes); and a picture has been drawn, such as the world never yet saw, and never will see, of a pure, virtuous, open, generous people, inhabiting a country governed for ages by the most despotic barbarians, ground into the dust by a host of lesser native officials, and steeped in the most deplorable ignorance and superstition. Meanness, cunning, cowardice, and self-interest, are almost necessary, under such a system, to carry on existence, and these have been their resources, accordingly, for ages. The free mountain peasant of Switzerland is the pure and simple man, because he may live without the necessity of a recourse to such vices;—the Hindoo never can. If the European, who has been deeply conver-

sant with the Hindoo character in all situations, were to speak out, he would confess that the apparent simplicity and humility of the Brahmin is a garb of hypocrisy, to look well among the people, and carry on his influence; but that he is, in reality, selfish, vicious, and intent only upon blinding the credulous for his own ends. Let the Hindoo be seen at variance with his neighbour, or in any situation where his hatred is excited, and he will be found relentless in his anger and cowardly in his revenge. Watch him at a moment when he has a chance of turning a single rupee, by almost any means, and let it be said, if his disregard of all but his object, his meanness and duplicity in pursuing it, can be exceeded! Nevertheless, in a country where the law has so long been the strongest, it must be granted that the want of morality and principle is no great phenomenon.

Englishmen who have written so much in favour of the natives, it may be boldly pronounced, never mingled in situations where their private contests and private conduct with each other could be clearly observed. The editor went amongst them prejudiced in their favour: a few years undeceived him. From the rajah to the ryot, with the intermediate grades, they are ungrateful, insidious, cowardly, unfaithful, and revengeful. This much the editor thinks it necessary to say, to account for the colouring and acts of some of the characters in the ensuing narrative, without which its authenticity might be questioned by some who have read the eulogisers of the natives of Hindustan; but,

most assuredly, an Hindoo would hardly treat as matter-of-fact, without comment or apology, many of his own vices, as Pandurang does, if they were not commonplace to him, and inherent in the national character.

The editor apologises for saying so much upon this subject. It was needful to say something, and he has been as concise as he well could upon such a topic, and has now no more to do than to beg the reader's indulgence, for the execution of his share of labour in the present publication.

PANDURANG HÁRÍ.

CHAPTER I.

HITHERTO it has been customary with those who write a history of their lives and adventures, to commence with a minute detail of all the circumstances connected with their earliest years—their family, birth, and education. I would most willingly follow preceding examples in this respect, had my history resembled that of other men; but, unfortunately, I was a long period of my life in utter ignorance to whom I was under obligations for my introduction into the world; so that any information I may subsequently have acquired respecting my parentage can hardly be said to belong to the first part of my history, as it would clearly do to that of the generality of mankind. This singularity, therefore, in the very outset of my existence, and the wish I have to adhere as closely as possible to the regular order of events, must be my apology to the reader for my not saying anything here upon these points, or even hinting

just now who I discovered my parents to be; I shall only thereby keep the public in the dark for a time on this subject, as I was once kept myself. Should any part of it betray an impatient curiosity as to these matters after I have begun, I must entreat it to keep my example in view, and practise a little Hindoo patience, trusting to my promise of disclosing these important secrets in due time and place.

My earliest sense of existence, as well as I can remember, was severely painful. I have a clear recollection of an Hindoo, advanced in years, stooping down and extricating me from the hoofs of a troop of bullocks and horses, where I had been left by some one who evidently made my safety a matter of small account. One of the animals, beneath which I was wallowing, had crushed my tender arm with its hoof and set me, naturally enough, screaming and roaring with all my might. My deliverer took me to his tent, and bound up my bruised limb. I remember well his features and dress. He was a Mahratta, and a man of some consequence, travelling in the district upon business. On his head he wore a large white turban, tied under the chin: a stuffed coat, dirty boots, and a tremendous sword dangling at his side. He delivered me to a servant, who pestered me with questions which I could not answer; demanding who I was? whence I came? who were my parents? to which, of course, I was unable to make any other reply than *malla towak n,hae* ("I know not"). I then heard the

servants disputing about my age. One said I was four years old, another five; at length the last number seemed to be decided upon. I next heard them debate upon my caste; and one of them perceiving the red mark upon my forehead, said I was a true Hindoo. It was to my good fortune he made this declaration, as I was deemed worthy of being noticed in consequence; for had I been of a different caste than I was—that of Choomar or Sudra, for example—I should have been left to starve, or been glad to herd with my old companions, the bullocks, once more. I was now taken into the presence of my deliverer, having been instructed by his servants to say, as soon as I came near him, *ram, ram, Ma,ha,raj* ("your most obedient, my lord!") Whether I pronounced this salutation ill, or with proper confidence, I cannot now tell, but it was very kindly noticed by the Mahratta Ma,ha,raj. He ordered me to be clothed, and to have a red turban given me. I can even now remember the effect this treatment of me by the master produced on the servants: they immediately behaved kindly to me, styling me *baba sahib, Ma,ha,raj d,hunne*, as if addressing their lord himself. My young mind soon became elated by this attention, and my childish pride grew intolerable. I discovered that as long as I possessed the master's favour, I might act as I pleased among his inferiors. In short, I at last considered myself his son, and he gave me the name of Pandurang Hàrì.

I will now pass over the term of my infancy, which was

employed in learning to read and write—my preceptor being a *mahouhut*, or elephant-driver—and will take up my adventures from the period of my completing my sixteenth year. At this time Holkar, the great Mahratta chieftain, assembled his army, and a division of it was commanded by my benefactor, Sawunt Rao Gopal Rao. There was no expectation entertained that we should come to an engagement for many months, although preparations were at that moment deemed necessary. I had made a considerable proficiency in my studies, which pleased Sawunt Rao, and I soon found the advantage of my acquirements. My benefactor's chief *carcoon*, or clerk, allowed me to sort out and direct despatches to officers at a distance who belonged to the command of the great Sawunt Rao. The consequence this gave me in the eyes of Sawunt's dependants was wonderful. A boy soon came to offer his services as my *kullum dani*, or inkstand-bearer; another, as my *chitree burdar*, or umbrella-carrier; and when I mounted on my *tattoo*, or pony, I could at any time have commanded the attendance of a dozen grooms, so many pressed forward to offer me their services. I accepted two, and a slipper-bearer, but was greatly concerned to know how I was to pay them their wages. I consulted the carcoon, who laughed in my face, and demanded if I was mad to think of giving wages to those *nimuk hārām* (rascals). "No, no, Pandoo," said he, "let them wait on you, and in a few years you may be able to provide for them under our

government; however, as you may want money, it will be a good plan to get Sawunt Rao Ma,ha,raj to grant you some to give these fellows, and you can keep it yourself. As to paying those scoundrels, it would be as absurd as flinging your money into the river." It will recur to the reader that I had now been some years with Sawunt Rao, and having been gradually initiated in Mahratta roguery, it will not be matter of surprise that I entered into this scheme with true Hindoo delight. Success attended my first attempt, and the carcoon pronounced I should soon make my fortune. He advised me to neglect no opportunity of fingering money; "For," said he, "Pandoo, there is nothing in this world equal to rupees. Get them, and you will get everything. We shall have rare plunder at the ensuing battle." I here ventured to observe that the tables might be turned upon us, and we ourselves get plundered, instead of being the plunderers. "O Pandoo!" he replied, twisting his mustachios, "you little know the Mahratta valour! In the field every man has the power of the many-armed Vishnu: no nation can resist us; we are world-conquerors! You will soon see whether I speak truth or not."

On the ensuing day we marched; and when I observed the war-elephants in terrific panoply, and heard the roar of the nagarrahs or state-drums; when I saw the long-drawn plain covered with soldiers, both horse and foot, all busy in martial preparation, I gave in my own mind implicit credit to the resistless valour of the Mahrattas, and began

to plan how I should dispose of my rupees and plunder, as soon as I should gain possession of them. On arriving at our halting-place, I attended, as was customary, to make my obeisance to my master. He ordered me to wait in his tent while he ate his dinner. I seized this opportunity of sitting in a corner; and sending for my inkstand and papers, I made a great show of business. During his dinner, Sawunt Rao never once noticed me; but afterwards, when smoking his hookah, he exclaimed, "Ah, Pandoo! what—can you write?" I answered in the affirmative, and showed him some specimens, with which he appeared highly pleased. He dictated several letters to me, and sent orders by me to different officers outside the tent. He next desired me to admit to his presence any individuals who had complaints to make or orders to receive, as he was then at leisure to attend to business of that nature. I withdrew, and waited in a small tent through which all must pass before they could enter the presence of the Ma,ha,raj. I had not been there long before a complainant* appeared, and urged me to obtain an audience for him. I, of course, gave myself great airs, and roundly asserted that the Ma,ha,raj was sleeping, and would not be disturbed. The complainant seemed to know how to awaken both servant and master. Slipping a handful of rupees into my hand, he promised me double the amount if he succeeded. I

* Chiefs like Sawunt Rao have in the East cognisance both of civil and military affairs.

now softened my manner, and condescended to say, "I will see if I dare wake Ma,ha,raj, but I really fear for my life, yet for your sake I will risk everything." The Ma,ha,raj was still smoking his hookah when I entered, and I at once opened my business. I was ordered to admit the complainant, and was sent for presently myself, and desired to take down his business in writing. I did so, but was not yet as adroit as I should have been in putting my words quickly together, though I would not on any account confess my want of skill. I went on scribbling anything that came uppermost in place of the poor man's story, and when I had done, I knew as little about it as before I began. Fortunately, I could see by my master's air and manner, he was as indifferent to the merits of the case as myself, and therefore I felt very little uneasiness upon the subject. The complainant was dismissed with the assurances of receiving justice. I took care to follow him, and abuse him for his long tale, declaring my fingers were stiff with taking it down. The poor dupe had sagacity enough to discover there was one medicine which never fails to cure rigidity of the joints in such cases, and he accordingly applied his silver ointment to my hands once more. The cure was instantaneous: I promised him everything, and assured him his enemy should be trampled to death by an elephant if he desired it. I then ordered him to call at the carcoon's on the following day, when all should be settled; but reminded him that this official must

finger the rupees as well as myself, at least in equal proportion. So saying, I withdrew to count over my money. According to my advice, he did not neglect to appear at the carcoon's; but that sagacious officer, having been informed of the petitioner's interviews with me, ordered him to quit his presence. He once more came to me, and I endeavoured, by assurances, and promises to keep alive hopes which I very well knew were doomed to be disappointed. He took his leave of me, bowing so low as to knock his forehead on the ground.

Day after day passed over, and still Hybatty (such was the petitioner's name) remained unnoticed. He was even rudely treated by the official hirelings who lounged around the tents. Far from resenting such conduct towards him, I rather encouraged it; for Hybatty had become my second shadow whenever I appeared abroad. At length, losing all patience, I angrily bade him return to his village and trouble me no further, as the Ma,ha,raj would attend to the petition when it suited his convenience. Hybatty gave me a look that spoke stronger things than language could do, and hurried from my presence.

CHAPTER II.

As yet there appeared no probability of a battle taking place; nevertheless, our army was kept up in full force and constant readiness for it. Our tents were pitched on the side of a river, while a majestic banyan-tree spread itself over a rising ground at a short distance. Thither, in the cool hour of the evening, I was accustomed to go, and remain alone in reflection upon my dependent circumstances. "Unhappy being that I am!" thought I; "neglected by parents who still remain unknown to me, though destiny has flung me in the way of the good Sawunt Rao, what claim have I upon him or upon any fellow-creature? My very existence depends upon his; should he die, what will become of me? Should he frown upon me while living, adieu to all consequence with those around me! To obtain an honest livelihood is impossible; no trade is so unprofitable as honesty. It is very hard that, with the inclination to be just and upright, I should be compelled by the circumstances of my life to be a rogue. Could I but amass a few thousand rupees, I would lose no time in settling at Indore as a corn or grain merchant; and then,"

thought I, rising up with delight, "I will be honest for the rest of my days. I had just finished making this notable resolution for conducting my future life, when I saw a little way off the figure of a tall man, muffled up in shawls. He was looking everywhere around him, with a countenance full of suspicion, as if he feared lest his actions would be observed. He did no see me, it was evident, and I became very curious to know the cause of his extraordinary appearance, and the object he had in parading about in that spot in the dusk of the evening. I immediately climbed up into the banyan-tree, and hid myself among its luxuriant foliage. The person whose steps I had been watching now approached the sacred tree, and having performed *pùja* * to a stone deity at its foot, proceeded to unmuffle himself from his shawls, carefully folding them up and placing them under the tree. He now squatted down, and began to grumble in a low tone, "Not here! I am too early! I can wait until he comes. I know my information is correct. He comes here every evening to meditate some fresh villany, no doubt." Here he paused, and my breathing paused too; for he could have meant no one but myself, I having been the only constant lounger under that sacred tree at the evening hour. "Who can this man be?" thought I; "perhaps he is some one acquainted with my parents." On this idea suggesting itself, I was on the point of descending from my hiding-place, and begging him to

* Worship.

satisfy my curiosity; but I was luckily deterred from my intention by hearing him again talking to himself, and saying, "Well, as I could not obtain redress, and was plundered for attempting to assert my rights, this dagger, thanks to *Hanoomān*,* has given me vengeance. My enemy is quiet enough, unless he has met with a god in the *mota bowrie*.† That young villain, Pandurang Hàrì, shall keep Tulsajee company." There he stopped, and I almost fell from the branches of my refuge with fear, when I discovered this man to be no other than the petitioner who so handsomely rewarded me on his coming to demand justice of my master. His case, notwithstanding his bribes, and the profuse way in which he distributed his *nugd*,‡ remained entirely neglected to that hour. Fancy may depict, but I cannot put into language, the fear I felt, and the breathless terror that came over me, when I reflected that the creaking of a branch or the rustling of a leaf might betray me. The evening was still and silent as the grave. A cold perspiration stood on my forehead; the insect that fluttered around me, whose wing at another time would have been inaudible, seemed now to fill my ears with its hum, so alive was I to the minutest sounds. I soon heard Hybatty mutter slowly to himself again, "The young villain! the young villain! to take my rupees, to neglect and insult me! Thanks to Siva and Brahma, I want not their help now: I

* The name of an idol in the form of a monkey.

† Deep well. ‡ Ready cash.

am paid with the silver bangles* of my enemy, and his cash to boot!" A little while after this he arose, and went to a peepal-tree a short way off, where he appeared busy about something, I could not well make out what. He was delving in the earth; and, as I afterwards found, burying his ill-gotten treasure. He now halted, as if unwilling to leave the place while there was a chance of my visiting it. He returned to the sacred tree again, and I heard the words, "Pandurang Hàrì—dagger—his greedy heart," disjointedly uttered. He afterwards, raising his voice, said, "I swear by the holy *cow*† never to give up my revenge, though I pursue him to Oogein, and from thence to Delhi, and from Delhi to Cape Cormorin; I will not rest till I have taken his blood." In a few minutes he muffled himself up in his shawls as before, and went his way. His departure was a reprieve to a condemned criminal—I seemed rescued from a suffocation worse than death. Once more my lungs got into full play, and my limbs appeared to be relieved from the heavy weight which oppressed them. When my enemy had disappeared, I descended from my hiding-place, and did not deem myself secure until I had joined my comrades in the camp. "It is well," thought I, as soon as I had gained a place of security, "it is well I can turn the tables upon my enemy. He has confessed a murder; and as I am to have no peace while he lives, I will try if I have not wit and interest enough to get him put out of the way. We

* Rings worn about the wrists. † A solemn Hindoo adjuration.

shall see whether I cannot save him his journey to Oogein, Delhi, and Cape Cormorin!"

When I reflected how corrupt all persons in authority were, I feared that, after all I could do, there would be but a small chance of beholding my foe dangling from a tree, while he could command money enough to fee the farmer of the district, whose mercy was generally extended, even for the most flagrant crimes, to those who could purchase their impunity. The district farmers were compelled from necessity to raise money by every opportunity, and they never neglected their interests; for when a new one had not been a month in his district, he was every hour liable to be superseded by a successor, who had agreed to pay the Ma,ha,raj a higher sum for the office. On this account the actual occupant turned all robberies and murders to account, and never executed any who could purchase their lives, while the poor were sent into the other world without mercy. Thus justice was regulated, as it is in most countries, by individual caprice or expediency, instead of certain immutable principles, which should make it the same thing everywhere. I considered, therefore, that this mercenary principle in our government might tell against me after all, if I appeared active in the business, and my enemy should afterwards escape by paying a fine to the farmer: for it was likely I should thus incur his threefold vengeance, and hasten my own destruction. What plan to pursue now became a matter of the utmost importance.

"The tiger," I reasoned to myself, "must be deprived of his claws, and the lion of his teeth, before we can combat with them successfully. My enemy's treasures are his claws, and they are in my power. Fool that I am! are they not buried under the peepal-tree, where I saw him grubbing in the earth?" I accordingly set off for the spot, and pulling out my dagger, tried the earth around the roots of the tree for some time in vain. I was just on the point of giving up the search, when it struck against a hard substance, which I discovered by the scanty light of the dawn (for I had taken no rest during the night) to be a brass pot, tied round with leather at the top. I could find nothing else; so closing up the hole and levelling the earth, I returned to my tent, lit my lamp, and proceeded to examine what I had found. First, there were the silver bangles of Tulsajee, the murdered man: these were worth two hundred rupees at least. Then there were gold *mohurs** tied up in long narrow bags, which the victim of my foe had, as is customary, bound round his waist for convenience in travelling, after the Mahratta manner. I then came to silver rupees, and women's ornaments of the usual kinds: the *nuth*, or nose-ring; the *boogrie*, or ear-pendants; the *toolsee*, or necklace; *kurrun, p,hool*, or ear-ornaments; the *bajoo-bund*, or armlets, with many rings all of gold, besides loose pearls and copper *pice*.† "Well, Pandoo," thought

* An Eastern coin. † A small coin.

I to myself, "you have indeed made the most you could expect of your enemy!" I justly considered, from the rank of the fellow in life, that this must be all the wealth he had in the world, ill-gotten as it was. I calculated the whole to be worth two thousand rupees, and I dug a hole under the mat on which I slept, and there deposited my treasure. Having done this, I lay down to weigh what step should be taken next, and to fix upon the most certain and safe method of bringing my foe, Hybatty, to the gibbet.

CHAPTER III.

THE next morning I bent my way towards the village where my enemy resided. The first step I took, consistently with the plan I had laid down for myself, was to wait upon the principal and heads of the village. These men of authority being aware I was a *hoogorie*, or one attached to the suite of a great man, received me with due respect. I longed for a good pair of mustachios to twirl about and exhibit my consequence; but, unfortunately, I was only eighteen years old, though in appearance at least four years more, and was obliged for lack of length in those dignified appendages, to content myself with twisting about my shawl with an air of self-importance, and so as to exhibit my person to the best advantage. I then opened the purport of my visit, by stating that I was come to inquire into the complaint of a person named Hybatty against a man called Tulsajee, and desiring the complainant might be sent for. It will be easily guessed that this was my old enemy, who so pleasingly intimated his good will towards me under the banyan-tree. He drew back on first seeing me, as if he had rather have not met me there. I appeared wholly unconscious of

his harbouring any ill design against myself, and immediately addressed him, saying, "My good friend, you may now see I have not forgotten your cause, which would have been attended to much sooner, could I have secured the ear of the Ma,ha,raj; but his time has been so occupied with political correspondence, that he has really had no leisure to think of anything else. You may now state your case, and justice shall be rendered you." Hybatty,—for he it was,—looked aghast at this unexpected condescension, and gave me a glance so peculiar in character, and yet so very far from agreeable, that I felt more than ever anxious to do him the kindness I had in store for him. It appeared as if he looked through my intentions, and suspected all was not as fair as it seemed to be, without his being able to fathom my designs. Hesitating a little at first, he soon launched out more fluently against his enemy, Tulsajee, as if the latter had really been in the land of the living! He repeatedly urged me to summon him, and see if he dared to deny any part of what he should urge against him. I replied; "I am sure he cannot deny any part of your assertions: however, let him be summoned." This devil Hybatty looked in my eyes more hellish than I thought it possible for a human being to do, on hearing the order given. After some delay, a message was sent from the friends of Tulsajee, saying he had left the village on a journey, and his family had not heard of him since he set out. "Oh, it is well," I replied (addressing myself to the

village authorities); "we cannot help it; when he returns, assemble a *punchayet*,* and give this cause patient attention, seeing that Hybatty has justice." Having said this, I took my departure. The reason for my acting thus was, lest, upon conviction of the murder, Hybatty should accuse me of not attending to his complaint, and make my negligence a plea for the act which he had committed. I now proceeded to the *maamulut-dar*, or farmer of the district, and mentioned my suspicion that Tulsajee was murdered, and who the murderer was. "This affair," said I, "will put a few rupees into your pocket, as Hybatty, the murderer, has money I am certain; so you may fine him to the tune of five hundred rupees at least. He may plead poverty, but do not heed what he says; and as he knows a fine will get him clear, he will not be at the trouble of denying the crime; or, should he do so, I can help you to evidence that shall bring it home to him." The farmer thanked me repeatedly for my consideration of him in giving this intelligence, and promised to proceed against Hybatty, without compromising me by mentioning my name. In a few days I heard of his apprehension, that the farmer had charged him with the crime, but that he stoutly denied all knowledge of it. I immediately visited the farmer, had a secret interview with him, and desired him to tax the prisoner with the crime again, and to tell him he had flung the body into the mota bowrie. The farmer was astonished how I

* A court of jurymen five or more in number.

could tell him so much about it, and, I thought, almost regarded me as an accomplice. I told him he should learn all as soon as the affair was finally settled. Hybatty was then taxed with the crime again, and told the place where he had concealed the body. Upon this, and supposing the farmer knew everything, he confessed, and said he was the farmer's humble servant (meaning he would pay any fine the farmer might demand of him). I was not present, but had an agent at the trial. The fine was fixed at a thousand rupees, because, as the farmer afterwards informed me, there was a better chance of getting five hundred clear, by an appearance of lenity in remitting half of the original sum levied.

Hybatty, now completely in my toils, and little aware of his poverty, immediately consented to pay the rupees. Being in custody, he sent for his son, and, on his arrival, directed him where to find the money. The son set off, and I was malicious enough to wish I had again been in the peepal-tree, to witness and enjoy his disappointment. In the meantime, Hybatty sat smoking, confidently chewing his beetle, and cracking his jokes. The body of Tulsajee had just been fished up from the well or mota bowrie, and was exhibiting to the populace, with the throat cut, and a stab in the heart; while, to enable the murderer to secure the silver bangles with greater expedition, both hands had been severed at the wrists. The culprit's son now approached, with rueful face and heavy footsteps, to the place

of his father's durance. Being admitted, his tale was soon told—for he had not been a moment in the prison before a most dismal yell was heard from its interior,—a more piercing shriek than ever struck a mortal ear before! Sobs and groans succeeded,—then supplications; and, when these were found of no avail, oaths and curses were dealt out liberally against those who had defrauded him. My name was on Hybatty's lips among the rest; but little did he think the plunderer of his property was so near him. The intelligence of his inability to pay his fine was speedily carried to the farmer, who, before long, made his appearance, with a new rope and two *dheers*,* and in a few minutes Hybatty was a corpse. I then returned to my tent, reflecting, as I went along, on the events which had just passed. "What have I done?" thought I. "I have extorted money from an unhappy and injured man, under the false pretence of obtaining redress for him; I have neglected him, though I accepted his presents; I have driven him to desperation, made him a murderer, robbed him of his property, and betrayed him to death!" I now thought, but in vain, to ease my conscience by the consideration that my victim was deserving of death, having been a murderer. But the truth that, but for my neglect of him, he would not have stained his hands with blood, ever came uppermost. I contrived, however, to console myself that I had acted in self-defence. Hybatty had sworn to

* Low-caste men, employed as public executioners.

take my life, and I made that serve me as a justification. Besides, a great religious festival was at hand; and a dip in the river, with the offering of a cocoa-nut to the god and a trifle to the Brahmins, would purify me, and effectually remove my uneasy sensations.

Scarcely was the foregoing happy conclusion drawn, when a band of armed men surrounded me, and, without assigning a reason, hurried me away to a place of confinement, in a tent well guarded within and without. My terrified features must have condemned me, for I in vain attempted to assume a look of careless innocence, as I was not insensible of its value at such a moment. The commotion of my mind betrayed itself in my countenance. My tongue became parched, and fixed to the roof of my mouth; my eyes were cast down; if I attempted to speak, the faculty of language seemed to have deserted from my command, and I imagined every one around must regard me as a wretch, knowing (so fear led me to think) that my most secret thoughts and actions lay unmasked before them. When these feelings had subsided a little, I began to take breath, and consider what charge could be proved against me, and to hope I should find no great difficulty in clearing myself. I determined to explain the whole affair to the Ma,ha,raj. I was well aware, however, that I must get over my first extortion from the unhappy petitioner in the best way I could, by softening or concealing the extent of

it. The whole of the first night I was left, well guarded, to my solitary feelings and to repentance. Early in the morning I was awoke from disturbed rest by cries of *kis*, *kis* (clear the way), and ordered roughly to arise and appear before the Ma,ha,raj, who was sitting in his tent, surrounded by all the tokens of Mahratta dignity. On my arrival before him, what was my horror on seeing the son of the murdered Tulsajee wringing his hands, beating his breast, and calling me at the same time his father's murderer! Opposite to him was Hybatty's son, behaving in the same manner, and charging me with the murder of his parent. I was overwhelmed with their accusations; and perceiving the carcoon with his papers and inkstand close by, I begged him, for the love of Vishnu and Brahma, to inform me what was the meaning of such accumulated charges. Instead of a friendly reply from him, or even a recognition of his late deputy, he gruffly commanded me to be silent, and most consequentially passed by me. This was a dreadful blow to my hopes, and I fell to the ground insensible. When I recovered, I found myself on my own mat in my tent, guards being stationed without. I now considered what was best to be done to avert the impending storm. Could I not bribe the carcoon? This I thought a happy expedient, and I would willingly have bestowed upon him all Hybatty's treasure if he would but ensure my safety. I then proceeded to examine the place where I had

deposited this treasure,—but what was my dismay when I found it gone! Bangles, pearls, money, ornaments,—all had disappeared! I cursed my ill-luck, and laid myself down once more to ruminate on this fresh disaster. "What a piece of retribution!" thought I. "Little did I dream, when wishing I could witness the disappointment of Hybatty's son, at finding his treasure gone from under the peepal-tree, that I should so soon experience the horrors of the same situation." I recollected the yells and shrieks and curses of Hybatty, and even imitated him, though not quite as audibly. I groaned with internal anguish, and vented many a mental curse on my own avarice and folly. To be accused of two murders, also, was more than I could get over; I thought the guilt of one enough for any mortal, but the double charge almost bent me to the earth. I still imagined that, could I but get a hearing of the Ma,ha,raj and explain matters, I might escape the load of ignominy heaped upon me. But yet it was most probable I should be hanged without such an opportunity being allowed me, and I should perish with every imputation remaining upon my head. I had, however, no remedy but patience, and I made up my mind at last to await my fate calmly, be it whatever it might.

CHAPTER IV.

THE morning slowly broke; and when the sun had arisen, I was ordered to prepare for the eventful interview, which I pictured full of horrors. I was again ushered into the presence of my master. The Ma,ha,raj was smoking his hookah. He fixed upon me his dark eye, flashing with anger, and exclaimed, "Serpent as you are! instead of protecting the subjects of the world-conquering Holkar, you have stained your hands in their blood; you have committed outrageous crimes." I replied, "This, my lord, I deny; I am no murderer." "Do you dare deny being an accomplice in the murder of that boy's father?" said he, pointing at Tulsajee's son. "I do, my lord," was my reply again. "Think not to blind me by equivocation; you know the hand that inflicted the mortal wound—you were the accomplice of the assassin," said the Ma,ha,raj, his eyes flashing fire as he spoke; "mock me not: were not the man's bangles in your possession—buried under your own mat, in your own tent, by your own hand?" "This, my lord," I answered, "I do not deny." "You knew they were the bangles of Tulsajae?" "I had good grounds for

thinking they were, and that the poor man was indeed murdered." "Then, wretch! you were implicated. Prepare yourself for the fate of your partner in blood, Hybatty." I attempted to explain and show my innocence; but the Ma,ha,raj interrupted me, waving his hand and crying, "The bangles, the bangles! off with him!" All present—amongst whom were my old friend the carcoon, and the two sons of the dead men, cried out, "Aye, aye! the bangles, the bangles! positive proof—all is clear!" I was now hurried away. At the door of the tent, the carcoon asked the attendants if any *dheers* or *maungs** were at hand, in my hearing. Most fortunately for me, there were none, or this scoundrel clerk would have soon had me pendant from the next mango-tree. Once more alone, I gave myself up for a lost man, seeing no chance of escape. Having gone to the entrance of my tent to beg a little water, and ask permission to perform my ablutions before I left this world, I was rudely thrust back by my guards, but not before I had seen my late groom mounted upon my pony, with my slipper-bearer behind him, both in travelling order. They grinned impudently on seeing me, and in tones that cut me to the soul with mortification, exclaimed, "Ram, ram, Ma,ha,raj," at the same time spurring my pony, and scampering off—the bystanders relishing the joke. "Well, if I am to be hanged, the sooner the better, and then it matters not who has my tattoo," said I to myself; but I

* Low-caste men, usually employed as executioners.

could not help taking a lesson from the conduct of these rascals, who, when I was in power, were grovelling cleaners of the beast which they now bestrode, and would have licked the dust off my feet! This had just happened when my inkstand bearer made his appearance. "What!" said I, "are you not off also? I expect I shall see you march presently with my inkstand under your arm!" "No, no," he answered; "we must use the inkstand better, and save your life. Sit down, and draw up a petition to Sawunt Rao immediately. Keep not a single thing from him, as you value your life; and if you are not really guilty, there is a chance of your still coming off in a whole skin. The Ma,ha,raj would not have noticed this affair at all; but they who govern are desirous at this moment of conciliating all ranks of the people, and of giving them the semblance of protection." I thanked him, and inquired how this *toofan*, or storm, had arisen. "Why, you must know," said he "the carcoon's boy is my friend, and I learned from him that the carcoon has been a long time narrowly watching you, and that he felt jealous of your influence. He also abused you for not sharing several presents you obtained with him. Your absence at the village for two successive days aroused his suspicion that you were making a harvest and excluding him from the profits. His suspicions were strengthened by seeing the farmer's *hircarrah*, or messenger, bring a letter for you, which he unfortunately took to the carcoon's tent instead of yours. The latter ordered his horse, reached the

farmer's house before you, and there gained some valuable information; for he returned before Hybatty was hanged, and went alone to your tent. In a short time it was rumoured that the murdered man's bangles had been found under your mat." I inquired if any other articles were mentioned to have been found there besides the bangles. He replied, none: the carcoon had reported that the bangles only had been deposited there. I now comprehended the motives of the carcoon. He thought I should deny the fact of the bangles being there and that not a word of the treasure would proceed from my lips. Thus having got me out of the way by means of the dheers, he should be able to keep undisturbed possession of treasure worth eighteen hundred rupees, after he had restored the bangles to the son of Tulsajee. I also saw clearly not a moment must be lost, and instantly drawing up a petition to my late benefactor, I forwarded it by the faithful inkstand-bearer for presentation. In it, I intreated the Ma,ha,raj, if he doubted my statement, to question Hybatty's son, and ask him if his father did not send him for money to fee the farmer, and particularly as to the spot to which he was sent, and it would be seen I had spoken the truth. I did not fail to state that with the bangles were many other articles of value, and I had reason to believe forty gold mohurs, in a small narrow bag, had been plundered from Tulsajee, and that the carcoon dare not deny my assertions. I represented that this man had a design to ruin me in his esti-

mation, and also to take my life, in order that he might enjoy the fruits of his plunder without molestation. I solemnly assured the Ma,ha,raj that I was only actuated by self-defence in depriving Hybatty of his ill-gotten wealth; and that, now he was no more, I had not the least objection to the son of Tulsajee having possession of his father's property. I concluded by referring the Ma,ha,raj to the farmer of the district, who himself heard Hybatty confess the murder, without implicating me or any other person as an accomplice.

When I had despatched this important petition, I felt more at ease. The Ma,ha,raj read the paper, and instantly ordered the carcoon to be seized and searched. He was too old a hand at such matters to be found with the treasure upon his person, and nothing but the bangles were discovered. Tulsajee's son deposed to several other articles which his father had about him when murdered; and this, together with the suspicious circumstances of the carcoon going alone to my tent, induced all the country round to place credit in my assertions, especially as I consented to give up the treasure. I was now set at liberty, and immediately fell down on my face before the Ma,ha,raj, who really showed pleasure that he was able to let me go free. He severely lectured me for neglecting to bring Hybatty's case before him originally, which, had I so done, would have saved bloodshed to others and hazard to myself. The carcoon was ordered to restore whatever articles the son of

Tulsajee could recollect his father to have had when he was murdered and plundered by Hybatty. The son gave in an amazingly long list of things, which I was well aware never formed part of the treasure I had brought away. After Tulsajee's son had given in this list, the son of Hybatty put in one still longer, concerning articles buried under the peepal-tree which belonged to his family, independent of what belonged to Tulsajee. Both these knaves had been suborned against me by the carcoon, and, in consequence of his promise of reward and restitution of the articles of value, had consented to become complainants against me. They acted their parts as mourners with true Mahratta hypocrisy on the first day of my examination, as I have before shown. Now, when the tables were turned, they were anxious to become my friends. My evidence also was necessary to bear them out in their enumeration of the articles buried by Hybatty, which they sought to recover of the carcoon. On their making out their claims, one said, "Was there not a nuth?" I nodded assent. "Was there not a silver beetle-nut box?" said the other; and again I signified in the affirmative. "And was there not a gold *chundun har?*"* I responded, "Yes; worth, I should think, three hundred rupees." The carcoon was all this while in a situation better to be imagined than described. He found out that he had made a very unprofitable seizure in my tent, and, at the rate we were going on, we must ruin him. I revelled in the anguish he

* Large necklace.

felt at every nod I gave. I knew his life's blood was not dearer than the treasure I was drawing from him. His evident perturbation added to my delight, and the thought of his endeavour to deprive me of life for a few rupees prevented my having any mercy upon him. As I nodded to every bare-faced lie of his two tormentors, I felt as if I partook a fresh draught of a cordial elixir that almost made life perfect happiness. The list was at length swollen to four thousand rupees instead of two thousand, the sum of which the carcoon had possessed himself. He was ordered to make the whole good to the last pice, and to be imprisoned until he had so done. I was now dismissed from my service in a civil capacity, and appointed clerk to a *paugah*, or corps of five thousand men, and so removed entirely from Sawunt Rao. This was very mortifying to my pride; but I was, after all, well off to escape with my life, besides punishing my old friend, the carcoon.

CHAPTER V.

I HAD just entered upon my new service, and presented myself to the Sudar, Khundeo Rao Baboo Rao, when despatches arrived with orders for us to march for Indore, Holkar's capital. We set out as soon as was practicable after the receipt of the order; and here it may not be amiss if I endeavour to delineate a Mahratta army, the first time I saw it in marching trim. A Mahratta army consists in general of horse and foot of every neighbouring nation, religion, and costume. In truth, it makes a very motley appearance, as it is under no discipline, and destitute of a regular uniform. Few of the men in the same line, either cavalry or infantry, have weapons of a like form. Some are armed with sword and shield, others with matchlocks or muskets; some carry bows and arrows, others spears, lances, or war-rockets. Many are expert with the battle-axe, but the sabre is indispensable to all. The men in armour, of whom there are many to make up the variety, cut a very curious appearance. A helmet covers not only the head and ears, but protects the shoulders. The body is cased in iron network, or in a thick quilted vest. They

give the preference to a straight two-edged sword before the curved one used by the Persians and Arabs. They have no regular commanders, according to the rule of seniority. The principal officers are called *jummahdars*, some of whom command five thousand horse; others, with the same title, but five hundred. Every rajah, prince, or leader, is responsible among the Mahrattas to the Peeshwa, or head of the empire, for his general conduct. He pays tribute for his district, and attends when summoned with his quota of men, which is regulated by his wealth and the population. He is supreme in command over his corps, which is attached alone to him and to his fortunes, and adheres to whatever party he supports. The Mahratta camps display a variety of standards and ensigns. Each chief is distinguished by his own. Red is the prevailing colour, cut in the shape of a swallow's tail, and decorated with *zurree puttah* (gold and silver tissue).

After a fatiguing march, we reached Indore, the capital of Jeswunt Rao Holkar, whose subject and servant I then was. Mulhar Rao Holkar, one of the commanders in the army of the first Peeshwa, was instrumental in extending the conquests of the Mahrattas to the northward; and, according to the usual policy of the Mahratta government, received a portion of territory in the province of Malwa for the support of his troops. This happened in 1736, and laid the foundation of the authority of the Holkar family; for, as the oldest prince and family of the primary government

declined, that of the principal viceroys, according to the usual custom, became independent. Mulhar Rao Holkar died in 1766, and was succeeded by his nephew, Tuccage Holkar. This prince governed until 1797, leaving four sons, Cashee Rao, Nuilkar Rao, Eithogee Rao Holkar, and Jeswunt Rao Holkar. The two first were alone born to him by his wife. Cashee Rao succeeded Tuccage as the eldest. A dispute soon arose, however, between Cashee Rao and his brother Nuilkar Rao, who claimed an equal share in the inheritance; and they both repaired to Poona, for the purpose of settling their dispute by the intervention of the Peeshwa. Dowlut Rao Scindea at that time exercised a despotic authority over the Peeshwa, and looked upon the opportunity as highly favourable for adding the possessions of the Holkar family to his own. Having made his terms with Cashee Rao, he surprised and slaughtered Nuilkar Rao, and nearly all his attendants, at Poona, in 1797. The wife of Nuilkar, being left in a state of pregnancy, produced a son named Khundeo Rao. Scindea obtained possession of the infant, retained Cashee Rao in a state of dependence, and proposed to govern the Holkar dominions in his name. The other brothers, Eithogee, and Jeswunt Rao, who had attached themselves to Nuilkar Rao, were at Poona when the latter was murdered. Eithogee fled to Kolapor, where he was taken in open hostility, sent to Poona, and put to death. Jeswunt Rao made his escape to Nagpore, and for some time found a

shelter there. But the intrigues of Scindea at length prevailed, and the rajah placed him in confinement, from which he contrived to make his escape. He then fled to a place on the Nerbudda. Scindea, at that time too deeply engaged in securing an ascendency at Poona, had not leisure to pursue the fugitive, and probably deemed his resources too contemptible to excite serious apprehension. This remissness gave Jeswunt Rao time to apply the means, which are always at hand in India, for collecting an army of adventurers by the prospect of plunder. It was not until 1801 that Scindea became alarmed in good earnest at the progress of Jeswunt Rao, and began to collect an army on the Nerbudda. In consequence of this determination on the part of Scindea, we were ordered to proceed to Indore.

Our preparations were now complete, and we were confident of success. For myself I would much rather have been allowed to stick by pen and ink, than be forced to handle the sword and shield; but all were required to do their best. Our cavalry was a strange rabble, mounted on tall and short horses of every kind and colour. Saddles were always slipping off for want of girths; strings, fastened to any old pieces of iron by way of bits, supplied bridles; old turbans served for martingales, and tent-ropes for cruppers. A most villainous medley of every clumsy shift under the sun was seen on all hands. The infantry were just as wretchedly accoutred as the cavalry; everything was wanting, and nothing regular. Here voices might be

heard roaring out for ball, and there for muskets or arms. Those who were not fortunate enough to procure any weapon at all, supplied the deficiency by a bamboo-pole with a bit of iron at the top, which they dignified with the designation of *birchee*, or spear. It came to my lot to serve out to these ragamuffins the necessary accoutrements: but they who gave the order to me to do so, never calculated on the scantiness of the magazines; in consequence I was complained against a hundred times a day for what it was not in my power, nor in that of my superiors, to prevent. One said I would not give him a sword; another that I refused him a shield. This man said that "Pandurang" withheld a spear from him; and that asserted he could get neither weapon nor answer from me. In vain did I explain again and again, that no more arms were left in the arsenal: I ended but to begin the same excuse again, and was wearied to death with my office. This was not the only inconvenience I had to encounter; I was in continual fear of being blown to pieces by the rascals who had the care of the ammunition, and went swaggering about, with their matchlocks lighted, amid piles of loose gunpowder, of which they took no more notice than if they had been heaps of sand or sawdust. As evening approached, I fancied I should obtain a little rest, when an order came out for me to pay the soldiers, in order to encourage them for the approaching battle. This I found a most arduous task. I had a list of their names, but it was so incorrect as to be

useless to me. The rogues took advantage of several of their names being alike, and pressed upon me with such avidity that I believe I paid some of them twice or thrice over. At the end of the payment there was a deficiency of money, and I left many unpaid. More complaints were then made against me, but it was in vain I explained; I was ordered to make good the deficiency. This was just as possible for me to do as to raise a thunderstorm. The vagabonds, who were unfortunate in not getting their money, stuck to me like leeches, perfectly satisfied in their own minds that I had pocketed their pay. I walked off as fast as I could; but they dogged me about everywhere, muttering their dissatisfaction, and asking how they were to fight with empty bellies? One would fling away his cartouch-box, saying he wanted white powder, and would have none of the black. At length I determined to look big, and swore, by all the deities in the *Védas*, I would have them blown from a mortar; that they should await my pleasure; and that, if one approached my tent after the evening gun, they should see I would put my threat into effect. A dead silence ensued among them; but, every now and then, one of them would tap his empty belly, and point to his mouth, thus making their half-starved condition the plea for their boldness; and I must allow their complaints were but too well founded, and they were justified in their importunity. Pity was all I had to give them; and I cheered them with the hope of plunder on the morrow,

and the certainty of a glorious victory. At length I left them as forlorn as they came.

Soon after, the jummahdar sent for me, and inquired if there were sufficient arms and accoutrements for the troops, or rather for his own fifteen thousand men. "Is it possible there can be any deficiency, my lord," I replied, "in this glorious country? I could have equipped ten times the number, if it were necessary. Never were men so well furnished with abundance of death-inflicting weapons as those of your paugah." "That's well, Pandoo," said he; "we have everything complete, you see." "Very true, my lord," I replied; "the whole world cannot again exhibit such an arsenal as that of his Highness Jeswunt Rao Holkar." "Have we not a noble arsenal?" "You have, indeed, my lord," I replied. The jummahdar was much pleased at my flattery, while I laughed all the time the conversation lasted. On my taking leave, the jummahdar asked, in a low voice, and with a very significant look, if the pay were plentiful as the arms and ammunition. I told him every man had rupees enough to stuff his pillow with, if he chose, and that they were all in high spirits, eager for the hour of battle. He seemed highly delighted, and bade me be early at his side the next day, for Scindea might be hourly expected. It was now nine in the evening, and dark; not a soul of the half-starved unpaid soldiers was near, and I began to flatter myself with a good night's rest. I had just concluded my supper, when I heard an unusual bustle outside my tent,

and was struck by hearing voices in all directions, crying out, "a *jasoos*, a *jasoos*" (a spy, a spy). "Put irons upon him immediately," I exclaimed; and it was done. In the meantime, I repaired to the jummahdar to inform him of the discovery. He was half-asleep, and on hearing the purport of my visit at that hour, seemed angry at being disturbed for such a trifle. I asked his pardon, desiring to know what should be done with the spy. "Why, hang him instantly," he replied; and dropped again into his doze. This was full authority enough for me. I went and issued the necessary orders, which were immediately carried into effect, and then retired to my bed, highly pleased at having so well completed my duty, and being perfectly satisfied with my own conduct.

The eventful day at length dawned. I awoke early, and opening my tent, looked abroad: all was dark and misty. I went to call a servant, and proceeded groping my way to his tent, rather than seeing it. Between my tent and his was a mango-tree; and as I crept under its branches, I felt something touch my face, which, on laying hold of it, I discovered to be the body of the spy whom we had hanged on the preceding night. Fortunate was it for me I escaped being seen to come in contact with the corpse; for in that case I should have been deemed contaminated, and have had to undergo several troublesome purifications. I awoke my servant, and we talked of the spy, not being able to guess who he was, as, in fact, no examination of the un-

happy wretch had been thought about. On leaving the tent, I saw my faithful inkstand-bearer, who had by his advice aided me in my difficulties respecting the murder of Tulsajee. He made a significant signal to me, the cause of which I did not understand. By this time there was light, and the sun was just showing itself, so that it was easy to distinguish the features of a human being. The inkstand-bearer approached me, and asked if I knew whom I had ordered to be executed the evening before. I observed that it was only a spy; and then it occurred to me that I had taken no steps to discover whether the man whom I had put to death were really a spy or not. "Do not be alarmed," said the inkstand-bearer; "we shall be all busy enough to-day, and no one will be able to inquire whether you have done right or wrong. I, for one, can answer, you have cut short the career of a villain, who has but met the fate he merited a little earlier than he might otherwise." "Who can it be?" said I. By this time we were pretty close to the mango-tree; when my companion, without making a reply to my question of who it could be, bade me look up and see if I did not remember that long meagre face. "Good heaven!" I exclaimed, "the carcoon—it is Govindah, my old enemy!" There he hung, as cadaverous and ghastly as in his life, if it were possible; and yet I thought death had, on the whole, improved his personal appearance. "How can this be?" I exclaimed; "pray explain, my good fellow—tell me how it can have happened." I then hurried

him with me to my tent, where, being seated, he proceeded to inform me that the carcoon had been closely guarded from the day he was ordered to restore the property of Tulsajee, valued at four thousand rupees; that upon his arrival at Indore, his family came to him, and advised him to pay the money and get out of confinement; but he persisted in declaring he had not a rupee in the world; in short, nothing except the two bangles. His uncle and family, including his mother, made up the sum with great difficulty, and brought it to him. He promised to pay the amount, and endeavour to recover his character. The greedy miser, however, reflecting upon the subject, deemed the four thousand rupees a singular mark of divine favour towards him, thanked his tutelar idol, and, securing the money about his person, contrived to give his guards the slip. He hoped to pass the camp under favour of the evening, and to go none knew whither, not even himself. He had not proceeded far before some of the troops who got no pay that day, and were prowling about for whatever they could lay their hands upon, surrounded and robbed him of his booty, which was sufficiently ample to compensate them for their loss of pay. The carcoon told them he should complain of them to the jummahdar; and seeing him go that way, they shouted out "A spy! a spy!" This artifice succeeded, and they who had robbed him, gagged him instantly in the dark, so that, I believe, he has suffocated before he was hung. Thus the carcoon, my enemy, by a singular concatenation of circum-

stances, suffered the very fate he was so ready in awarding me. Independently of this, I could feel no pity for the cold-blooded rascal, who accepted from his family a sum of money it impoverished them to raise, in order to restore his character, and then broke prison that he might decamp with it. The ingenuity of the drunken soldiers to prevent the carcoon's making a complaint amused me highly. With my little regard for the subject of their trick, I must say, that, on the whole, I was rather gratified by it than otherwise. I therefore determined to pass the business over in silence; and, lest the family of the unfortunate man should hear of the circumstance, and make a stir at headquarters, I deemed it prudent to have the body cut down and buried without delay.

By this time it was all alive in the camp, which had been a little space before so deathly still. As the day advanced, clamour, turmoil, and preparation increased. The drums roared, on every hand, the call to arms. The war-elephants, caparisoned and ready, yelled with impatience, and towered loftily over all other living objects. The neighing of horses, the clash of arms, the buzz of impatient voices, the sounds of command, the march of the irregular and confused masses to their stations, was a new and impressive scene to my eyes, that now, for the first time, witnessed the bustle and excitement of the moment previous to battle. Soon the firing of guns, at first slow and irregular, then more rapidly, convinced me the work of death had begun in some

quarter; and it seemed speedily extending itself towards the station of my troop, which I had joined well mounted, and with which I remained with a fluttering heart in awful suspense. The current of battle now rolled close to me, and action soon took away all reflection, for we had enough upon our hands. Our men were all lean kine, and too scantily fed to be much heavier than skeletons. Our horses were in little better condition; and when Scindea's cavalry came down upon us, we were knocked off on the ground before we could strike a blow. In vain I tried to rally and remount my men. I succeeded in prevailing upon a few only to rally: the best part of them turned tail and fled, without once looking behind. Thus the division to which I was attached was speedily disposed of. Our infantry getting mixed with the cavalry that had been driven back by Scindea, was taken by it for the infantry of that chief, instead of our own; and the sabre began to cut away upon them as if they were a field of *joanee* (standing corn). I laboured in vain to rectify the mistake, and stay the carnage of our own men: my voice was lost in the scene of death and discord, the rush of rockets, and the groans of the dying. How long this scene might have continued before it could have been put an end to I cannot tell, if the attention of the cavalry had not been drawn to something which, even in the heat of battle, was truly appalling to the sight, and made them, even there, think of self-preservation. A wounded elephant rushed in among them. Mad with the

pain of a ball he had just received, he rolled his unwieldy bulk through and over the slashed infantry, and among the terrified horse. Beast and rider were overturned and crushed beneath his tread, and all that lay in his path became victims to his fury. This effectually put a stop to the havoc the cavalry had begun, as the horses took fright and bore their riders off the scene of action, leaving their own broken infantry to be trampled to death by the enraged beast,—at least, that part of it which they had not kindly mangled themselves. At this moment the cavalry of Scindea charged our artillery, and captured it all, together with our baggage. This was decisive. Jeswunt Rao Holkar saw his world-conquering heroes disperse in every direction, and the battle terminated in leaving Scindea no enemies in view, the pursued soon leaving their conquerors far in the rear; the virtue of leanness, which served us so ill in the battle, being now of singular service in making our escape.

In this my first battle I escaped unhurt; but I was sorry to find this was not the case with my old benefactor: he was not expected to survive the severe wounds he had received more than a few hours; and when we halted, which, finding our enemies pursued us but a short distance, was not a long time after the battle, I went to see him. He had received three musket-balls in the shoulder, and a sabre-cut in the neck, while a spear had been driven through his thigh. No one knew what to do or how to treat his

wounds. He was perfectly cool and collected, recognising me immediately, and pointing to a small box, which he ordered to be opened. From this box he ordered a silver *kurdoorah* * to be taken. This, he said, had been found upon me when I was rescued from among the bullocks. "You may some day find out by it, Pandoo," said he, "who are your parents." I kissed his hand, and my tears flowed fast upon it; I recollected the protection this best of all the Mahrattas had afforded me in the most helpless circumstances of life. His family arriving at that moment, I withdrew with a heavy heart. The Brahmins prayed, his relations uttered loud lamentations, and the doctors prescribed; but Sawunt Rao died.

As soon as the grief of Sawunt Rao's relatives had somewhat abated, I visited his widow and her brother to condole with them; and before I quitted them, I begged they would take charge of the kurdoorah left me by the deceased. They readily promised me it should be preserved with the family valuables. This was highly to my satisfaction; and giving it to them, I respectfully bade them "farewell!"

* A chain for the waist.

CHAPTER VI.

HOLKAR, after his disaster, so quickly repaired the losses he had sustained near Indore, that he found himself, early in 1802, able to commence fresh operations. He determined, however, to change the scene of action from Malwa to Poona. Cashee, his brother, who had been allowed to repair to Kandeish, had for some time shown symptoms of a disposition to join in making war upon Scindea. In order to preserve the dominions of the Holkar family, Jeswunt Rao determined to liberate, if possible, the infant Khundeo Rao; and as Cashee Rao was, from natural imbecility, unable to govern, he determined to proclaim the infant head of the family; and accordingly, as his uncle, demanded possession of his person. He likewise stated that he should himself take the administration of the government, and should march upon Poona to obtain justice of the Peeshwa, who had long been in a state of the most abject subjection to Scindea. Before the middle of 1802, Holkar, according to his threat, took the field with a well-disciplined force, compared with that which had so

lately been beaten by his enemy. Soon after we commenced our march to the south.

Scindea was fully alive to the danger which threatened his interests at Poona, and detached a large portion of his army, under one of his most able generals, towards that place. This force arrived in the vicinity of Poona in time to effect a junction, unmolested, with the troops of the Peeshwa. I took care, having learned something from my past experience, that I would not want money and ammunition again. Our army was indeed a formidable one: our last defeat was a sad scene of confusion and disgrace, and we had to regain our credit. The day of my second battle approached, and we were far more efficient than on the first, and everything was in the best order. On this occasion we commenced with a smart cannonade, which was continued for three hours, until my jummahdar, with his cavalry, supported by the rest of the sirdars, charged Scindea's line of infantry, and putting them to the rout, obtained a decisive victory. We then pushed on for Poona; but, when only a few miles from its walls, the Peeshwa sent to propose terms of accommodation, which Holkar at once rejected: we had, therefore, another battle to fight. We lost no time, and our cannon again roared over the plains, to the Peeshwa's discomfiture. He fled from the field, leaving in the hands of his Minister certain engagements he wished to effect with the English. Holkar followed, in hopes to get the Peeshwa into his power; but we were too

slow in our motions to cut him off. Our leader wished to get the Peeshwa, to make the same use of him as Scindea had done. Holkar, the Peeshwa's Minister, and the English at Poona, held consultations, and endeavoured to bring about an accommodation between the two parties, the particulars of which I could not learn. Holkar and Scindea, however, again became friends, and united themselves with the Berar Rajah; while, during these amicable arrangements, the English escorted the Peeshwa back again to Poona, and placed him upon the musnud once more. This happened about seven months after our victory. The object of Holkar, Scindea, and the Berar Rajah entering into this confederacy was to subvert the alliance formed between the English and the Peeshwa. It was now evident we should have to encounter the *Topee Wallas*,* who would give us more trouble, according to report, than we had had yet, and in a way to which we were unaccustomed. Scindea and Holkar being united, I was put upon a new footing, and had the command of two hundred cavalry, following Scindea's army in its march. At Assaye we opposed a great English general. He attacked our left wing, and we changed the position of our guns and infantry. The English advanced to the attack; our fire was dreadfully destructive to them, and we so thinned the right of their line that a body of our cavalry was induced to charge it, of which number I was one. We thought ourselves to be doing

* English troops.

business pretty satisfactorily, until we found that the enemy's cavalry was in reserve to intercept us. They repulsed us with great slaughter. Those English are large powerful men, and the weight of their sabres almost annihilated my poor troopers. They unhorsed numbers of us merely by riding against us. I was so served for one, and, with many others, feigned myself dead. Our army being routed, fled, and the English pursuing them, left the guns they had captured in their rear. These I proposed to turn upon them; we got up and did so with great effect. It was clear we made our shot tell pretty well, for a body of the Topee Wallas, with their general at their head, rode up to put a stop to the firing. The general had his horse killed under him. At this time our troops still hovered about one part of the English line. At length we fled, leaving ninety-eight pieces of cannon and seven standards in the hands of the English, with twelve hundred of our men killed.

After this fatal defeat nothing prospered with us. Assyghur and Burhampoor were taken, and everything seemed lost. Scindea at last sent Goparrah, one of his officers, to the English, and the latter selected me to accompany him. We proceeded to the English army, and had a conference with the general, who was dressed in a long red coat covered with gold. Many of his sirdars were equally well arrayed, and were attending him at the time. This was the first time I had ever been so near a white person. The general sat

on a throne,* and we upon the carpet, as usual. It struck me as most extraordinary to see them wearing shoes and boots when walking on a carpet, just the same as if they had been on the open plain. I saw one of the sirdars filthy enough to spit in his handkerchief, and then put it into his pocket again, which nearly turned me sick. Goparrah felt full as much disgust as I did at the sight. The general first demanded our credentials: but we had none to produce; and this made us liable to be turned out of the camp disgracefully; but we were suffered to remain until the time necessary for sending to our master for them had elapsed. These documents were necessary to verify our powers to treat, and without them we ought not to have been sent. In the interim, Scindea despatched a letter, stating that he had determined to forward another commission, and disavowing Goparrah and myself. This was a most cruel trick to play us, as we might have been justifiably hanged up as impostors. But the English commander was well aware of the tricks of our sovereign, and believed our assertions, adding, he was fully convinced the master and not the servants were to blame. He informed us of our dangerous situation, and dismissed us.

More battles succeeded. That of Argaum was the next, where we lost thirty-eight pieces of cannon, and finally scampered off, as at Assaye. I now thought fortune had for ever forsaken us. Gewilghur, a strong fort, was taken

* The natives so call a chair.

from us, and I clearly saw the English had every advantage and nothing was left us of which to boast. The Rajah of Berar made a separate treaty with the English, and we were left to sustain the conflict alone. Scindea, at last, was obliged to make terms with his enemies. He ceded Broach in Guzerat, Ahmednugur in the Deccan, and other strong places, together with a vast extent of valuable territory. My old master, Holkar, though he engaged to join the other chiefs, had hitherto abstained from active operations himself in the war against the English. I had become quite a partizan of Scindea, for Holkar had no objection to letting his officers help Scindea's cause, though he himself deemed it prudent to keep aloof. He always pretended great friendship for the English; he was, however, discovered by them, and intelligence reaching them of his having murdered three persons on a false accusation, they determined to take away his dominions and give them to Scindea. The latter was of course delighted at this prospect: I was in the meantime obliged to devote my services to the defence of the fort of Deeg. The English are perfect war-tigers; they drove us out, and we fled to Bhurtpoor, leaving our cannon behind us. The loss of Deeg was a sad blow to Holkar and the Rajah of Bhurtpoor, who had joined us, and still kept the city. This place was eight miles in extent, and surrounded by a mud wall of great thickness and height. A broad ditch filled with water was at the foot of the wall, and the fort was situated near the eastern extremity, mounted

with a numerous artillery. The whole force of Rungeed Sing was thrown into it, while we were forced to entrench ourselves under the walls. The English opened their batteries, and fired on the fort for two days. At night we stockaded the breach effected during the day. At length they advanced to the storm as if nothing could overcome their perseverance. They crossed the water that lay between them and the walls, and gained the foot of the breach, surmounting every difficulty. Here they made many wonderful efforts without success. Again and again they boldly but ineffectually attempted to mount. We tumbled them back again, and made dreadful havoc, which we rejoiced exceedingly to witness; their chief sirdar was killed in leading them on. Day after day, with unabated perseverance, they attempted to gain their object, and as often failed. Once they were very near it, for the colours of one of their native regiments were planted within a short distance of the summit of our walls. We repulsed them, however, with terrible slaughter. On the following day they renewed the attack; and we discharged grapeshot, logs of wood, and pots of combustibles upon them, killing and knocking down all who attempted to ascend. They were at last forced to retire, and we, enjoying our victory, feasted ourselves day and night. But, notwithstanding our brave defence, we were ultimately obliged to come to terms with our foes, and peace was concluded between Holkar, Scindea, and the English. We now returned to Indore, where my services were no

more wanted, and I was ordered to go about my business; but I was not singular in being treated thus, and therefore could not complain.

I had now to consider what was to be done; Sawunt Rao no more, and not one being in the world with whom I could make interest to get a situation. My stock of cash hardly amounted to a hundred rupees—a very small sum to begin the world with again. I parted with my sword, but retained my *kuttar*, or dagger, and muffling up my head in a white shawl, I took my departure from Indore. About five miles from the city I reached the hut of a Gossein,* but hesitated about going near its miserable inhabitant. These scoundrels are the pest of the neighbourhood where they reside. Their habit is the only thing from which they can claim a semblance of virtue. They profess poverty, but grasp at every good thing they can lay their hands upon, wherever they go. They are clothed in a ragged mantle, and carry a long pole, and a *mirchal*, or peacock's tail. They never leave off importuning every class and order of people they see, and even threaten, if they find it will best answer their purpose, in case their rapacious demands are not satisfied. I was anxious to inquire my way to Poona, and reluctantly tapped at his wicket, calling, "*O Baba, O Ma,ha,raj.*" No one replied, and, opening the wicket, I discovered thick smoke issuing through the roof and over the doorway. I felt alarmed lest the hut should be on fire;

* A religious mendicant.

and thinking that, if I entered, I might be of some service in extinguishing the flames, I crawled in; for so small was the entrance, it even required dexterity to accomplish the getting through it. I could not see nor breathe for the smoke, though I could not discover any flame. At last I perceived a spark or two of fire, and, on approaching to extinguish it, I stumbled over something that seemed to be the body of a man, dead or alive. I lost not a moment in putting out what fire was there, and, examining further, found a body, covered with ashes and dirt, apparently lifeless. I dragged it into the open air to ascertain the truth, and found it was a wretched Gossein, the probable inhabitant of the hut. The air, assisted by a little water, restored the body to animation. He opened his eyes, exclaiming, "*àrry, àrry,*" an exclamation of surprise, and then relapsed into insensibility. More cold water flung in his withered face revived him, and he asked "who it was that thus disturbed his slumbers?" I explained to him his danger, and that but for me he would have been suffocated or burned to death. He made no other reply than a demand for alms. I dared not discover all my wealth, but gave him a few pice, pleading my poverty for not bestowing more. I saw he had been eating *bang*,* and this readily accounted for his insensibility and heavy sleep. He made no inquiry as to the safety of his habitation, nor once inquired if the fire had gone out of itself. I demanded the road to Poona. He

* A preparation of opium.

heeded me not, but continued mumbling to himself as if counting money. I repeated my questions, and he answered by asking what I wanted at Poona. He could not have put a more puzzling query to me at that moment, as I could not tell my business there myself. I spoke the truth, therefore, when I said, "I do not know; I have been turned out of Holkar's service, and am searching my fortune elsewhere." He ruminated some time, and then said, "Holkar is mad, Scindea is a fool, and Badjeroa, the Peeshwa, is both foolish and mad at the same time. Cringe no more to them or their underlings for bread. Have you not Brahma the creator, Vishnu the protector, and Siva the destroyer for masters—aye, better masters than they? Throw aside all your notions of pomp and parade, and take up your mirchal, your pole, and your wallet, and follow me. If you must go to Poona, I will accompany you; there are fools enough there, and we may reap a pretty harvest." On saying this, he produced those emblems of religious mendicity—the peacock's tail, the pole, the wallet, and leopard's skin to swing at my back.

I had often heard that these Gosseins realised great sums of money, and thinking, in my destitute situation, it might lead to some good, I determined to try the advice given me. My religious friend now equipped me in the proper way, but first stripped me, and in so doing discovered my hoard of rupees tied tight around my waist. He made no remark whatever on seeing them, but proceeded to grease

me all over, from head to foot, and then covered me with ashes and dirt. My hair he tied up on the crown of my head. Then I had the staff of my order put into my hand, together with the peacock's tail; the wallet and skin were slung over my shoulders; and thus arrayed, I followed my preceptor to Poona, he being equipped in a manner similar to my own. I found on the road that my tutor's name was Gabbage Gousla, and he appeared to be a character pretty well known everywhere, each traveller we met calling out, "*Ram, Ram, Gabbage!*" upon which Gabbage always bellowed forth some bitter complaint of hunger and poverty, and generally cheated the credulous traveller of his rupees. He remarked to me how callous the people were become, since the war, to his warnings and invocations of Ram and Seeta; "therefore," said he, "we must cut ourselves, and let the blood flow plentifully; for it is considered as much as their lives are worth to be the cause of spilling our blood." "True," said I; "but I really hope we shall not be obliged to have recourse to this severity." "Well, let it be prepared at all events," said he; "here is a very sharp knife; you need only draw the edge across your arm and the business is done." We entered Poona through a street of banyan shops. "Here is a harvest for us!" said Gabbage. We then stationed ourselves opposite a shop where grain was selling, and Gabbage began singing out pretty loud, "*Ram, Budjunta Ram, Sadjoo Budgelis Seeta Ram — Ram, Ram, Seeta Ram.*" No money coming,

he repeated the same words again, adding, "*Rass, Pandoo, rass!*—cut, Pandoo—cut." I must own I did not relish this business at all. It appeared I was to have all the pain, and very little of the profit; so that, when he repeated the words "cut, Pandoo—cut," I said "Certainly, Ma,ha,raj," and gave him a slice on the arm. He instantly set up a dreadful howl, scarcely equalled by that of Hybatty when he found his treasure and life lost together irrecoverably. The old villain charged me instantly with attempting his life. He told the people we had saved a few rupees between us, which I carried about with me; that being our joint property, I wished his death, that I might possess them all myself. I was immediately surrounded, my rupees taken from me, and I was carried before a great Brahmin, who was at the head of the police of the city. There I was stigmatised as a murderer, and had great difficulty in persuading them I was not one. The sanctity of my profession, however, saved me from condemnation or long imprisonment; but I was ordered to quit Poona directly, which no inclination of my own was wanting to second, as quickly as I could get away. I had thus the comfort of being parted from the old impostor Gabbage, and his profession, which was some consolation in my heavy misfortune; I had seen quite enough of both to disgust me. But though I had the world all before me; I knew not where to go, naked and destitute as I was. My first step was to wash myself from the filth in which I was

covered, and to clean my hair from the matted dirt Gabbage had plastered upon it. For this purpose I proceeded to a large tank near the road, and bathed myself deliciously—never did water seem so grateful to me. Hunger now was my next inconvenience, and I determined to combat it as long as I could. But I was in no long time obliged to resign the contest, and lie down under a tree to rest,—I felt so faint from want. I had not lain long when I heard a jingling of bells, by which I knew bullocks were approaching, and I determined to supplicate their driver for a morsel to relieve my suffering. He drew near, and on my telling him my state, he slowly unloosed his wallet, sat down beside me, and shared between us his coarse brown *aps.** He then asked me whither I was going. I told him it was a matter of perfect indifference to myself; I cared not where I went. On this he told me he was going to Bombay; that he was employed by a shopkeeper of the Topee Wallas to drive bullocks with goods to the Englishmen at Poona, and was then returning; that if I chose, I should go with him, and he would advise me to look out for some employment at that place. He also assured me that wages were good, and regularly paid.

I now considered within myself, and asked the driver what I could do there, and what employ I could get. He told me I might become a palankeen-bearer, and get seven and a half rupees a month—a rate of wages not to be re-

* Coarse bread.

fused; or I might labour at the cotton-works, where I might get ten rupees in the same time; or at the wet-docks; or be a gardener. I might else be a peon, wear a badge, and have some little authority in the bazaar; or turn sepoy in the Company's service. To the last proposal I at once put a negative; I had lately seen enough of fighting. The driver said he had left me to my choice as to employment; and I replied that if he could get me the situation of peon, or messenger wearing a badge, I should prefer it. He said he thought he could, but I must not expect to be a government peon at once, and I had better begin by serving his master, the shopkeeper, first; that I should have little to do, and it might lead to promotion. I instantly agreed to the proposal. I had a good chance of success; for his wife's brother was chief packer in the warehouse, and the chief packer was on good terms with the head carpenter, and the latter was related to one of the under-clerks, who was very intimate with the head-clerk, as the latter was with the Topee Wallas, all of whose business he managed for them, and such interest could not fail. I could scarcely suppress a smile at the ladder by which the fellow designed I should mount to a peonship. I told him it *must* succeed. He then asked me what I would give him in that case. I told him half my month's wages. "Say three months," he replied, "and I am your man. My name is Nursoo, and you may put up at my house. I have no place but the verandah or the cow-shed for you to sleep in, but this

you must not mind—do you agree?" I answered, "Certainly," reflecting on my miserable lot. We then proceeded to Bombay, and I assisted him to drive his cattle along the road.

In the course of our journey I inquired who this Company was of whom we heard so much. There were the Company's territory, the Company's sepoys, and Company's hookimis, or orders, talked of wherever I went. He said that, according to some accounts, he had heard the Company was an old Englishwoman, aunt to the king of the Topee Wallas, and that she had got so much money she might buy the whole world, were she not over-anxious to have our country first. Then again he told me that some of the Topee Wallas say "John Company,"* and he knew that John was a man's name, for his master was called John Brice, but he could not say to a certainty whether "Company" was a man or woman's name. Finding he could give me no account on which I might rely, I asked no more questions on the subject, as Nursoo seemed to possess but a scanty information respecting it.

At last we arrived at Parwell, where we left our bullocks and took boat for Bombay. In a short time we saw the city and fort. The vessels surprised me by their size; they were indeed a fine sight—such flags, and standards, and guns, and tall masts, and white sails, as I had no idea of before. The fort struck me much by its beauty; but

* For joint company; a corruption.

when I got inside it, I could not help expressing my astonishment at finding the large square filled with bales of cotton. "Why don't they take them away?" I asked, with some surprise, of my companion. Nursoo answered, "Remove them, indeed! they are the very heart and soul of the Topee Wallas; they get their rupees by them—let them alone for trading, my friend." I was going to say it was wrong not to keep the fort clear for resisting an attack; but I checked myself, as it might not be prudent to show too much military knowledge. At length we reached Nursoo's house. I spread my mat in the verandah, and having eaten some rice-bread, soon fell asleep.

Whilst my friend was making interest for me with the packers, carpenters, and clerks, I had abundant leisure to make my observations upon the country and its inhabitants. Bombay is an island containing every description of human beings: Hindoos, Parsees, Musselmen, Jews, Turks, Armenians, Arabians, Portuguese, and Englishmen. The Parsees were very numerous, and very fine men; ingenious, and enterprising, but extravagant, fraudulent, and the most abominable liars in India, or second only to the Mahrattas. The English had a governor, whom I saw, together with a general and judge, who wore dresses made differently one from the other. The first, a blue coat, cut with two tails; the second, a red coat; and the third, a black, save when on the seat of justice, and then he had a red loose gown like an Arab, and covered his head with white ashes, which

recalled my friend Gabbage Gousla to my mind again. The shops abounded in the most beautiful things in the world for sale. Many of these were quite new to me, and I never had a knowledge of the use of them: all was grand and beautiful in my eyes, the more when it is considered that I had just emerged from amid tumult, strife, and misery. I lounged at the barbers' shops, drank toddy with the Mahrattas, talked with the Musselmen, and finally went home to learn my fate from Nursoo, and whether a place could be obtained for me. I found that, in a few days, I should have a chance of succeeding; and I borrowed eight rupees of him upon interest, on the strength of my prospects. I agreed very well with Nursoo and his family, the latter consisting of a boy and two girls. I even blessed my good fortune, that had conducted me to a place of quiet and rest, such as I had never before enjoyed.

CHAPTER VII.

AFTER a delay of a few days, Nursoo informed me he had secured the situation I desired. I therefore got in readiness to take upon myself the duties of my new office, and accompanied him to the place where the goods of my employer were kept. I had not been there long before I saw the Topee Walla shopkeeper, who, to my surprise, was in a constant bustle, angry with all around him, and talking in bad Hindustanee to one, and in his own language to another. His face was quite pale, and he appeared much distressed by the intense heat. I was introduced to his notice by the head-clerk, M,hadaje Sinor, between whom and my new master some conversation passed in English, the purport of which I did not comprehend. I was then invested with a red belt, having a brass plate attached to it, on which some Topee Walla or English characters were engraven. My business was to wait at the door, carry about notes, and accompany the coolies from house to house with articles from the shop. I had not been more than a year in this situation when I became heartily sick of a service in which there was no chance of profit beyond my

wages, and very little of promotion. The Topee Walla seldom spoke to me, and when he did, it was as if he were addressing a dog. It mattered not, however, as I could never make out a syllable of his bad Hindustanee. I could perceive by his manner, notwithstanding, that he thought me a butt against which he might vent his anger with impunity. One day, after he had been in one of his angry and insulting fits, I began to consider how I should quit a service I detested, when the clerk gave me a note to take to "the gentlemen who lived in a tent on the Esplanade." I did as I was commanded. The Topee Walla Sahìb read it, and his countenance changed with anger, which I could see was about to fall upon me. I waited patiently, till he furiously asked me how I dared stand at his tent waiting an answer. He darted from his seat upon me like a tiger would upon his prey, struck me with his fist on the side and face, and finished by kicking me out of the tent. I was so surprised, I could not strike him in return nor defend myself; but I returned to my master, and told him of the usage I had received. He told me he would have the officer punished. My master did so; and I learned that the officer was fined a hundred rupees. The note I bore him contained a bill, as I afterwards found, which he could not then pay; and, instead of venting his rage on the money-lender, he chose to do it upon the bearer of the demand. I determined not to forget the usage I got from this man.

In a short time my master was obliged to reduce his

establishment, and discharged me; but, at my request, obtained a place for me as peon in a house of agency. Here I found one of the best and kindest masters, and most generous and liberal men I ever saw. His name was K——n. He kept race-horses, carriages, and dogs; gave great dinner-parties, and seemed to have every thing money could command. I could not, however, make much profit here, nor did I feel I was made of consequence enough in my own opinion. I was still unsatisfied; I wished to get into a police-office, and become a government peon. I at length made friends with the clerk in that office, and on the first vacancy left Mr K——n, and took upon myself the badge of my new place. Here I felt myself more at home. I could hasten or retard the business of a complainant in proportion to the rupees he put into my hand. Then, when in attendance to superintend the punishment of the rattan, I could mitigate or increase the pain, in the execution of the sentence, according to the sum given me. At night, none were so zealous and attentive as I was in apprehending rioters and thieves who could not pay; but those were sure to be let off who could. The Parsees will find money to prevent any of their caste being disgraced. When any of this tribe were implicated in a crime, I failed not to exact pretty high fees for their escape. By these means I laid by a few hundred rupees, and hired a house, and an old woman to cook for me. I buried my money in an inner chamber, where the old creature was not permitted to enter.

There were so many persons implicated in various irregularities, that my master had plenty of business falling to his share in the morning, and I had constant opportunities of bringing myself to his notice. He thought all was going on excellently well in his department, and I did not undeceive him, as I was certain the state of things could not endure long. This consideration made me the more exorbitant in my exactions. Month after month passed away, and still all remained calm. I converted my cash into gold bangles, necklaces, and silver rings, that I might be in readiness to decamp with my wealth about my person, should a storm arise. I even now applaud my caution; for in a short time a storm did arise, though not in our office, and by a chain of events it implicated us. The person at the head of the treasury was in the habit of intrusting the keys of the money-chests to the chief clerk, named Shackje, and simply contented himself with reckoning the balance remaining every Saturday. Shackje was too much of a Mahratta not to turn this confidence to account. As soon as the treasurer was gone, having counted his money previously, Shackje and others concerned admitted the merchants and shroffs of the town, and let them take the Company's money, paying interest for the use of it to Shackje and Co., under promise of bringing money for an hour or two to replace what was wanting on the following Saturday, when the treasurer counted the cash again. Some person, who was dissatisfied with his share of the plunder,

informed the treasurer of these doings. The latter kept the whole a secret, nor once allowed the clerks to guess he was well acquainted with their proceedings. Saturday approached, the money was counted, and found right, as the books showed it ought to be; and when it was locked up again, the treasurer took away the keys, saying, that in future he should keep them himself. A thunderbolt striking Shackje could not have stunned him more; he well knew the consequences. His master did not appear to notice his confusion at all. In an hour or two the unlucky clerk was surrounded by banians, soucars, and shroffs, as numerous as flies settling upon a carcase. No money could be had. In the bazaar, houses failed, shroffs and soucars stopped payment, ruin appeared everywhere, and trade was stagnant: the merchant-borrowers and money-lenders all were aghast.

The management of the Topee Walla treasurer, in securing to his employers all their money, was excellent; any other line of conduct would have rendered the loss irrecoverable. No Mahratta could have done better or exceeded in ingenuity and sagacity this English treasurer. Shackje was an intimate acquaintance of Filchajee, the head-clerk in our police-office, and at this time was frequently at his house. Both these specimens of Mahratta virtue sent for me. They gave me a paper mysteriously folded, desiring me to find out a *Byraggee* or religious mendicant, famous for his skill in magic, and deliver it to him. I found him accordingly, but had previously thought proper to read the communica-

tion. It enclosed a request that he would bewitch the treasurer, and put him to death by a charm; and if common conjuration could not effect the object, the *magic of the sword* was to be practised. If successful, they agreed to give him two hundred rupees. The Byraggee was nearly in darkness when I entered his cell. Giving him the letter, he went to a window to read it; and the light falling on his countenance discovered, to my surprise, the old vagabond Gabbage Gousla. It was he whom they had bribed to commit murder, and a better man could not have been selected for such a purpose. I muffled myself up as well as I could to prevent detection. He returned no written answer, but desired I would tell my employers their business should be done, but they must send the rupees. I left him and reported his reply. They had a long consultation; at last the rupees were produced, and I was despatched with the bag. I thought it would be a sin not to pocket fifty of the two hundred, and trust to my ingenuity to deceive the old villain. Arrived at his cell, I told him my masters had determined on sending him only a hundred and fifty rupees, until the business was done.—"What business?" said he, with a peculiar quickness. "How should I know?" I replied; "I only gave their words." "Well," he observed, "it shan't be long ere I get the remainder." On repairing to the office the following day, I found all in confusion. Gabbage had been seized, and the papers found upon him. Shackje was apprehended, but he stoutly denied all knowledge of the

matter. The police-master was assiduous in endeavouring to find out the conspiracy. The treasurer, whose life was implicated in the affair, was no less so. Gabbage was silent, and was remanded. On the following day the affair was pursued still further. The head of the police talked very lightly on the subject, and seemed to wish to impress on the public that he looked upon the whole affair as a jest, or as a nonsensical Hindoo conjuration, scarcely worth notice. Gabbage was again examined; and, to my dismay, stated, that I had brought him the note, mentioning my name, and thus implicating me. I now found he had recognised me, when I little suspected it. I was immediately seized, imprisoned, and left to my own reflections. The day of trial arrived, and Shackje was brought before the court; but when they came to the cell of Gabbage, he was not to be found. The cunning old rascal had effected his escape, by what mode could not be discovered. The Mahrattas attributed it to his skill in magic; and so prepossessed were they with this notion, that not one of them would attempt to hunt for him, believing it an utter waste of labour. The place of trial was crowded; Shackje, Filchajee, Gumbiah, and myself were charged with conspiracy to murder the treasurer. The two first were found guilty, and sentenced to imprisonment and to public whipping. Gumbiah and myself, being considered as ignorant tools, were acquitted. The police, however, had orders to ferry us across the water to the Mahratta country; and we were

threatened with punishment if we ever showed ourselves in Bombay again. Previous to our sailing from Bombay, we heard that the police-master had been committed to prison on the charge of receiving a bribe from Shackje, to screen him from the storm raised against him. How this matter terminated I never learned.

Gumbiah, who was ordered to be sent away with me, was a peon in the treasury-office, and, as well as Shackje, was now ruined. We looked very foolish when placed in the boat that was to convey us away. Nursoo, the bullock-driver, my old friend, was absent; so I could not take leave of him. When we arrived at Parwell, my companion and myself proceeded towards the Ghauts, intending to go to Poona, where I hoped I should not now be recognised. I had about eight hundred rupees on my person, which I concealed from the sight of Gumbiah, who made several attempts to discover if I was as poor as himself. "I know," he said, "you had money, as well as all the peons in the police-office, who were reported to be rich!" I said in reply, "it was true; but all were not as unfortunate as myself." He then wanted to know what I had done with my money. I told him I had buried it in my house; from which, being so suddenly removed, I had not time to take it. He said I was very unlucky to lose my money, and that whoever found it would be very fortunate. No further conversation took place respecting it. On arriving at our halting-place we found a lodging, ate our rice, and retired to rest, intend-

ing to proceed early the next morning on our journey. On waking I missed Gumbiah; he was nowhere to be found, and I did not doubt he had retraced his steps to Bombay, for the purpose of trying to get at my buried treasure. I enjoyed a hearty laugh at the fellow's avarice, and figured to myself his disappointment, and the risk he incurred on entering Bombay again. "Vishnu protect him," said I to myself, "though he be gone on a fool's errand." I began to ascend the Ghauts, and had already proceeded some distance, thinking how I should dispose of my wealth to the best advantage, when I beheld a body of horse approaching. Now, whether they were Pindarees or regular native troops —friends or foes, I was equally sure of being plundered. I had not a moment to spare; to conceal my person was impossible, and the concealment of my treasure was nearly as difficult. I proceeded, however, to the foot of a mango-tree, and there dug a hole, and deposited my little all, keeping no ornament but one silver ring on my person. I had good reason to applaud my foresight; for the horsemen were Pindarees, who, when they came up, stripped me, searched me for plunder, and finding nothing, ordered me to be their guide to a particular village. "Alas! my poor treasure! and must I leave it, and in such a dangerous place, too, hardly earned as it was! I shall be again moneyless!" I was thus inwardly complaining, when the stroke of a sabre on my shoulder stopped all further thoughts respecting my lost treasure.

"Scoundrel," said the fellow as he struck me, "where are you leading us? By the holy cow, if you go wrong I will make you a head shorter!" I again pleaded my ignorance in vain, and we pursued our way until we arrived near a fort. The Pindarees declared I was playing the part of a traitor; and some of them proposed to hang me, lest I should betray them to the English. I swore no English were near, and that I detested them. They renewed the cry, "Hang him! hang him!" and I certainly was never nearer execution before. We were now between two deep ravines, and just turning a corner, when a hundred muskets were opened upon us at once. Down dropped the Pindarees and their horses with them—there was no escape. Those who did not fall on receiving the first volley, galloped off, some from, and others into, the jaws of the enemy. Among the latter I was one, though fortunate enough to escape with a wound in my shoulder, which gave me great pain. The enemies who thus attacked us were the English, garrisoning the fort ceded to them by the Peeshwa. Spying us first from the battlements, they had lain in ambush for us in the ravine.

I was taken care of and attended by a doctor, who extracted the bullet, and dressed my wound. The doctor's mild behaviour and tolerable knowledge of the language, induced me to explain to him that I was no Pindaree, as he might observe, and had not even a sword with me, nor any offensive weapon. He promised to represent my case to

the commander, and did so. I was summoned to attend the officers of the garrison, when I told them the truth as to my falling in with the Pindarees, and how rejoiced I was at their being dispersed. The commandant promised to let me go when my wound was healed, and in the meanwhile sent me among his own servants. The family of the officer in command consisted of himself, his wife (an English lady), and one daughter, whom we called Jane Bebee, her real name was Juliana; but Jane being more adapted to the pronunciation of the Hindoo, we always knew her by that appellation. Her father had a number of horses, among which I almost lived. I paid so much attention to their department, that he took a great liking to me. Among his stud was a small pony of a jet-black colour, on which the lovely Jane used to ride; but in a very strange manner, having both her legs on one side of the horse. The poor animal was accustomed to it, and so the young lady and pony agreed perfectly well. I took great pleasure in cleaning or superintending the cleaning of this pony, or tattoo, as we call it, and gave Miss Jane high satisfaction, which her beautiful eyes never failed to display. Never were features more regular and beautiful than hers: I could gaze upon them from sunrise to sunset, and still admire. Jane Bebee spoke Hindostanee a little, and frequently praised me for the care taken of her pony, or, as she called it, her dear *Mottee*. At such times I would bow to the earth, lay my hand on my heart, and say I was her slave. In short,

so much did I think about her, and so little of my buried gold, that when I recovered of my wound, I forgot to demand my liberty. I had only recovered from one wound to receive another more severe. "O Jane Bebee!" I exclaimed to myself, "thy fetters bind me here stronger than those of thy father!" Fool that I was to cherish such notions—a poor Hindoo vagabond like me! All I could do was to curse my destiny, and admire in silence my beautiful mistress. One day she had gone out of the fort to ride, and remaining longer than usual, her family became alarmed at her absence. I was despatched to find out the cause; when (I never shall forget that moment) I met her at the gate of the fort, bleeding and insensible, borne on a litter. The pony, her favourite, had flung her off upon rocky ground. I was eager to learn whether she was dangerously hurt. I found her arm was broken, and she had received several bruises on the head. I ran to the doctor, followed by a second messenger, crying, "Doctor, doctor, Jane Bebee is no more!" and he proceeded to the assistance of the lovely sufferer. Many days elapsed before she recovered the effects of her accident; but when she first made her appearance, I eagerly embraced the opportunity of making my salaam, which she acknowledged by a most gracious smile. At length, wearied and despairing from the hopeless contemplation of an object that could not live for me, I deemed it best to separate myself from the spot, and bury, if possible, all my remembrance of her.

I now began to direct my thoughts to my buried treasure, and was ruminating on the first step to be taken to obtain leave to depart from the good commandant, when some of the sepoys, with whom I had contracted an intimacy, informed me that they were going to be relieved and marched back to Bombay. The commandant and his family alone were to remain. The new corps that came to take their place before they departed, I saw march in; and among the officers was the man who had treated me so ill on presenting him a letter from my master on the esplanade. I felt all my Mahratta spirit of revenge burn within me at the sight; and I determined to remain longer in the fort, to enable me to carry my threat of vengeance into execution. How I should accomplish it, I left to destiny. This officer seldom noticed any of the native men; and if he had condescended to cast his eyes upon me, I should have little feared a recognition. I observed that he went very frequently to the commandant's, and this made caution on my part doubly necessary. I soon found that Jane Bebee was the star of attraction there, and it quickly became rumoured that he had demanded her in marriage of her father, who had declined the proposed honour. I rejoiced at his disappointment, as it saved me much trouble, for I had secretly determined she never should be his. I knew not how I should have been able to prevent it; but to do so I was resolved, cost what it would. I swore by the holy cow, that the lieutenant, of all other men, should never wed

her. Whether Jane felt much disappointment I cannot tell; I could not perceive that she did, or that her health or spirits were at all affected by her father's decision. The lieutenant's visits were now less frequent than usual; one day, however, he came and continued a long time, and on leaving the house I observed him slip something, which I doubted not was money, into the hand of the *ayah*, or serving-woman of Jane. Significant nods were exchanged, but not a word spoken; and the officer went his way. "Well," thought I, "good fortune attends me indeed. This must be looked into narrowly. Now or never is my time for revenge." My first step was to make friends with the ayah. For this purpose I purchased some fresh betel-nut and pawn-leaf, which I folded into the shape of a cane tipped with gold leaf. Thus furnished with the key of intimacy, I soon found an opportunity of seeing her alone, and began my attack by praising her beauty and presenting her with the gold-tipped pawn-leaf. This was to be plastered over with fine chunam, and the preparing it conveniently rendered it necessary for the ayah to squat herself down, which action was the prelude to confidential chat. I presented my silver chunam-box, the contents of which she readily devoured when she had spread them on the leaf. I began by praising her mistress, and touched upon the proposals she had received from the officer, lamenting the father's refusal. "Aye, aye," said the ayah, spitting out her pawn-juice, "lovers don't mind what fathers say." "But in

this," I said, "they *must* mind." "Not if I can help it," said the ayah. "I would I could help also," said I, hypocritically. "You can then," said she, "and be rewarded, too, into the bargain." "You know I would do anything for Jane Bebee." She replied, "I think I may trust you;" and I swore by the holy cow to keep her secret. She then commenced a relation of the plans determined upon by the mistress, though first suggested by the lieutenant and supported by the ayah. "You know," said the ayah, "that the drawbridge on the north side of the fort, when lowered, brings you to the sally-port?" I nodded assent. "Well, then, the sally-port being open, you enter the commandant's garden." "True," said I; "go on." "Into the garden, you know, Jane Bebee's window looks. Now, if you can get a ladder into the garden, the lieutenant will mount it, take away his mistress, proceed to Seroor, and there marry her. Her father will see the propriety of consenting when they have been so long together, or at least of forgiving them when the marriage is concluded." "Get me the key," I said, "and I am the man you want. Success is certain: but when is the time fixed?" "To-morrow night, at twelve o'clock," was the reply. "If we can get the keys of the drawbridge and sally-port, no other difficulty remains." "If you succeed," said I, "when will you give them to me?" She replied, "At eight o'clock the next evening." We then agreed I should meet the lieutenant at the stables at eight o'clock, going there before gun-fire,

and not approach the fort again until twelve; then suffer him to ascend the ladder, await his descent, take away the ladder again and conceal it, lock the sally-port, swim the ditch, and enter the fort early in the morning. For this, three hundred rupees were to be mine. I agreed to everything, and I left her.

I had now to consider how I might best take my revenge on the officer. I did not wish to touch his life, but only to involve him in some serious trouble for the insults and disgrace he had inflicted upon me. After turning over the matter for some time, it struck me at last that the best method would be to suffer the lieutenant to mount the ladder, and then remove it; lock the sally-port, and, retiring, give the alarm of thieves: the commandant must then, I imagined, discover the lieutenant in his daughter's room. No better plan appearing practicable, I determined to enforce this. The evening came, the gun fired, and I was at my post. The ayah came trembling with the keys, and I set off before the gates were closed, the lieutenant following my steps in silence. I proceeded to the spot where the ladder lay, and we sat down opposite each other, the lieutenant every now and then inquiring how time went. The first bell tolled twelve. Up we went, he helping me to carry the ladder. The drawbridge was unlocked by the ayah from within, and the sally-port unclosed. We then entered the garden, placed the ladder, and the lieutenant mounted to the window. He had no sooner entered than I, eager to

accomplish my plans, began to lower the ladder, without in my hurry reflecting upon its weight; while bending under it my foot slipped, and down it came with a loud crash, breaking a lower window in its fall. Aware of my danger, I arose quickly, but only to fall again, for the sentinel on the ramparts seeing me, levelled his musket and shot me in the leg. The alarm was given—blue lights burned—and I, nearly unable to move, knew that to remain was certain death; I therefore made shift to hobble off on one leg, shutting and fastening the sally-port, and crossing the bridge as expeditiously as I could. I had scarcely reached the other side of the moat when I saw lights, both outside and inside the walls of the fort. I heard hammering at the sally-port from within, and voices calling in every direction. Alarm-guns were firing, and everything seemed in confusion. My leg was in horrible pain; and creeping among the bushes, I at last found a hollow tree, into which I got and hid myself, half dead with fear, and hardly venturing to breathe.

CHAPTER VIII.

Scouts every hour passed my hiding-place, and I heard them mention my name as being the only one absent from the fort. At last a party of sepoys rested themselves close to the tree where I was concealed. "Here is a pretty toofan!"* said one of them. "Aye," said the other, "a greater one took place in the Buna Sahib's house!" "What was that?" said the first speaker. "Why, the commandant rushed through the house with his pistols, and firing was heard in his daughter's room. The women screamed, the men scuffled, but how the poor lieutenant got off I cannot tell." "Lieutenant!" said the first, "was he concerned?" "Why, yes, to be sure; he wanted to carry off Jane Bebee: but her screams led her father to suppose he was an unwelcome visitor, and he must be shot, I think, for I heard them call out for the doctor. A pretty toofan indeed has been raised!"

I was really concerned to find that the poor lieutenant had come off so badly in his beloved's apartments. The

* Storm.

sepoys were soon hailed by their companions, and left the spot, to my great joy. My wound now gave me exquisite pain, which was notwithstanding hardly severe enough to quell the pangs of hunger. All being quiet, I emerged from my hiding-place, and set off, without knowing whither to direct my steps or how to travel, for I could not walk without great difficulty. What with hopping and limping, I contrived to reach a brook, on the banks of which I rested and quenched my thirst, which was increased by my wound. Though bound up in the best manner I was able, it did not abate in the pain it gave me. I had not remained there long, when I perceived a poor man driving some asses laden with firewood and bricks. I asked him for something to eat, and he produced his humble fare of bread, cold rice, and onions, which seemed to me a most delicious repast. He told me he was going to Poona, and seeing I was lame, offered me one of his asses to help me on. The good-natured creature was anxious to learn by what accident I was necessitated to walk in such circumstances: but it may be supposed I was not very eager to satisfy his curiosity, particularly as I had been residing with the English; we therefore journeyed on in mutual silence. I found, to my great joy, we were travelling on the road where I had buried my treasure, and fallen in with the Pindarees. I was sadly perplexed how to get rid of my companion, or how to search for my treasure without his discovering me. I thought of several plans to leave him for a short time, but of none that

were likely to be successful. At length we approached the spot; and I begged the man to rest a little, as I felt much fatigued. He acquiesced, and sat down under the tree on the very spot where my treasure was concealed. I did not dare to satisfy my curiosity by searching for it. At length the driver proposed we should proceed. I begged him to do so, and I would follow and try to overtake him. "No, no, my friend," replied the provoking fellow, "I cannot allow you to be racing after me; you could not overtake me, and then would be obliged to remain all day and night in the open air. If you are determined to rest another hour, I will do so too." I thanked him for his kindness, but heartily cursed his untoward conduct. His good-nature was most ill-placed at that moment. We sat another hour, and my curiosity increased irresistibly to know whether my riches were safe The ass-driver insisted on helping me upon one of his beasts, and I refused as civilly as I could, saying that I had determined to retrace my steps whence I came. I then bade him adieu, with many thanks for his kind assistance. "What!" said he, "will you return to the place where you were wounded, and rush into the very jaws of destruction? Impossible! you must do no such thing."

I assured him I should do so, upon which he offered to lend me an ass, and to accompany me, saying he would drive the laden beasts to a village about one coss distance, and accompany me when he had secured them there. This was music to my ears, and I immediately thanked him,

acquiescing in the arrangement. The moment he was out of sight I began to dig for my wealth; but had only turned up a few handfuls of earth, when the neighing of a horse struck my ears, and turning round I saw a company of sepoys, headed by an officer on horseback, approaching slowly towards the tree. My fears told me no time was to be lost, and with difficulty I clambered up among the boughs, which, on account of its being the rainy season, were very thickly covered with foliage. The party came close to the tree, and I discovered that the men wore the same uniform as those in the fort whence I had escaped. "I am very certain," said one, "I saw a fellow near this tree." "So did I," said another. "It must have been a ghost," said a third. "Let us wait and see him rise from the earth," exclaimed a fourth. They were on the point of marching away, when to my terror up came the ass-driver, inquiring of the sepoys if they had seen a man near the tree, or met him on the road. They inquired what sort of man; on which the ass-driver described me with the most mortifying accuracy, not forgetting the wound in my leg. The officer and men asked him a hundred questions respecting the lame man, all of which he answered with a strict adherence to truth. Surely, thought I, this fellow was destined to be my ruin. The soldiers consulted together, and it was resolved a party should remain there, in hopes of discovering the fugitive. My feelings cannot be described. Evening came, and still they kept their post; the ass-driver alone

made his bow and separated. I now execrated the officious fellow, whose unaccountable perseverance in aiding me had drawn me into this scrape. The sepoys were still sitting beneath the tree, when one of them amused himself with digging up the earth with his bayonet close to where my deposit lay. How my heart beat! I trembled and perspired at every pore. Digging deeper and deeper, the rascal at length hooked up a gold bangle. They quietly divided the spoil between them, to the very last article, and could hardly contain their joy. To see my treasure thus stolen before my eyes was too much. But for the pertinacious ass-driver, I might have found it safe as I left it. To think that there I lay, skulking up in the tree like a stupid owl, to witness such a scene, quite overcame me. Losing all presence of mind, I vented my anguish at the sight in a loud continuous groan. The sepoys started up, and cried "*B,hooh, b,hooh! arry, arry!*" This cry of "a ghost" reached the ears of the officer, who bid his men fire into the tree, and that would bring him down, if there; but if in the ground, he must be left to himself. The sound of the ramrods clanking in the barrels of the muskets seemed my death-warrant. I cried out instantly, "*Sahib, Sahib!*"—Sir, sir! spare me!" On this he laughed heartily, and said to his men, "I told you we should soon bring down the ghost." I descended immediately, and was surrounded by the sepoys, who, with loud exclamations of surprise, pronounced me to be the very Pandoo who had given them so much trouble at the fort.

My arms were immediately pinioned, and a file of men ordered to guard me with unceasing vigilance.

I now bitterly repented my selfishness, in not discovering my treasure before the ass-driver; had I done so, and given him a ring or two, the rest would have been still my own. I now attributed the fellow's care of me to his curiosity, or suspicion of something, at my wanting to get rid of him on that spot; he might have easily judged I had something in view which I did not wish a second person to witness. Had my avarice not prevented my making him a confidant, everything would have been well; but it was now too late to derive any benefit from the discovery, except as to the lesson it afforded me for the future.

I determined to explain to the officer my unfortunate condition, and beg him to release me, and restore me my money. I told him I had been promised money by the lieutenant, to aid him in his plans of elopement with the commandant's daughter; that the fear of my life, on having been discovered in the garden of the fort, induced me to abscond, and that I had no other design or designs in view. Finally, that I was an unfortunate man, who had been taken by the Pindarees, and captured with them, and that before meeting them I had buried my money under the tree. The officer told me that he believed my story about the fort, as the lieutenant and ayah told exactly the same; but as to the money and ornaments, I told a wilful lie. I solemnly asserted the truth of what I said, and enumerated

the articles which I saw the sepoys take away. "Point me out the two men," said the officer. I told him I thought I could, and they were ordered before me for the purpose; but their similarity in dress and appearance so perplexed me, I could not succeed; I looked at them, one and one, without success. He then told me he had no orders to detain me; that he and his party were going to Seroor for the pay of the battalion, but that he must keep me till he could write and obtain an answer from the fort how to act. As to the tale of my money, he said it was too much like a Mahratta lie to be believed, particularly as I could not recognise the men who took it. Saying this, he ordered me away, and bade the party proceed to Poona that night. I was hurried along well guarded.

We reached Poona at the time fixed, and on passing over the wooden bridge, I again saw my tormentor the ass-driver, quietly driving his animals into the town. "So," said he to the sepoys, "you have caught him. Is he a thief, a traitor, or a murderer?" "Neither," they replied, "only a jungle-fowl we caught at roost." The ass-driver grinned, and cast a look at me, which said, "You had much better have trusted me!" I did not speak, but with downcast eyes followed my guard in silence. In a day or two we marched for Seroor, where having received the money for pay, we returned again to Poona, and here the officer received instructions to release me. I in vain renewed my supplications respecting my money; they were disregarded, and I

was turned adrift in the vast city of Poona, with no means of existence, and no employment.

When I entered Poona the first time, in company with the villain Gabbage Gousla, I passed through Ahmednugur, Seroor, Louee, Corygaum, and Shikarpoor, a road barren and waste, having only a few wretched hamlets scattered over the extensive plains which we crossed in our route. Milk bushes or prickly pear surrounded the hovels of poverty and wretchedness, that, erected of posts and mud, afforded little or no protection against the heavy rains of the monsoon. On entering Poona, therefore, after crossing the river at the Sangam, or junction of the Moota and Moola streams, the contrast was remarkable between the misery of the former habitations and the splendour of the city. These my adventure in the Gossein character allowed me no time to observe, and now I had unfortunately too much leisure for the purpose. Upon the hill to the left of the city, I saw the ancient temple of Parvati,* encircled with trees, its summits glittering in the rising sun. The deep solemn sound of the najarrahs from among the recesses of the sacred enclosure, proclaimed that the hour of worship had arrived, and I felt a strong desire to lay my humble offering at the foot of the holy altar. Few people were to be seen in the bazaar at that early hour, and I continued to make my observations on the buildings around me. They were far more magnificent than any in the part of India

* The wife of M,hadeo.

to which I had been accustomed. Beyond the bazaar the houses were lofty, and erected part of the way up the walls with stone and strong cement, to repel thieves, who easily effect an entrance into mud or plaster-built dwellings. These houses were terraced; but many, close to them, being tiled, gave the city a look of great irregularity. In the central part I came to an immense reservoir of water, with an ever-flowing fountain in the midst. To live in Poona, near it, must I thought be happiness itself. The houses here were large, but had a dull and heavy appearance when they were not whitewashed. They were constructed of a solid wood framework, filled up with hewn stone, generally granite. The woodwork was beautifully carved after various devices, together with the ends of the beams. The windows were neatly closed with shutters to keep out the heat; but nothing cheerful appeared to be going forward within. A lazy Mahratta peon squatted at most of the doors, and here and there a Brahminee woman was employed drying clothes on the terraces. Some of the buildings had not a single window next the street, but were built round a small, square, and gloomy court, from whence all the light and air entered. The doors were folding, low, and substantial, and led to staircases so narrow, that only one person could mount them at a time.

In the centre of the city stood the palace of the Peeshwa, who was named Bajee Rao Pundit Purdhaun Behauder. It was fortified with regular bastions, curtains, and towers:

between two of the latter were enormous and massy gates. It seemed to me as if the place must be impregnable to the most formidable enemy. The palace itself I had not an opportunity of seeing, until a curious concatentation of circumstances, which shall by and by be unfolded to the reader, introduced me within its precincts. On many of the walls around me were drawn figures of Gunputty,* of of elephants, and peacocks with tails of most enormous expansion. In a short time the streets were peopled with Gosseins and Fakirs; women with copper vessels fetching water from the reservoir; Brahmins proceeding to the temples to perform their sacred offices; horsemen prancing about with well-trained animals; and porters and labourers carrying goods to market. The pavement of the street being rough, the carriages or waggons, drawn by bullocks with bells around their necks, must not be unnoticed: their noise almost deafened me; but I had no place of refuge to fly to from their distracting sounds.

Night arrived, the evening gun fired at ten o'clock, and I was still a wanderer in the streets. I went on until, turning a corner, I was laid hold of by two rough fellows, who ordered me to give an account of myself. What I said was not deemed satisfactory, and I was hurried to the Habeshee Kotwall, the Abyssinian police-master.

* Gunputty, or Ganessa, a favourite idol of the Mahrattas. That captured by the English from the Peeshwa in 1819 was of solid gold, with diamonds for eyes, and covered with jewels. It was valued at £50,000.

This man instantly demanded of me a hundred rupees, as a fine for being in the streets after gun-firing. In vain I pleaded ignorance of the laws. Finding I could not pay that sum, he ordered me to be instantly flogged, and turned into the suburbs. This cruel sentence was carried into effect, to my surprise and indignation, and I secretly vowed revenge.

One day a circumstance occurred, which gave me a glorious opportunity of wreaking my vengeance on him, and providing for myself at the same time. Disconsolate and miserable, I was prowling about the suburbs, and had sat myself down on a stone at the back of a solitary and mean-looking dwelling. The night was dark, and everything still, when fancying I saw a light in the house, I kept my eye on the window in which it had appeared. It was now gone, and a strange bustle attracted my attention from the interior. I heard a scream—a groan—and then all seemed hushed again to the stillness of the grave. I determined to see whether anything further arose out of this unaccountable disturbance. The clock struck eleven, and I had heard nothing more—twelve, and all was still silent. At length I observed the shutters of the old window grate on their rusty hinges. I changed my position, to be less in danger of observation, and kept anxiously watching the notions of the inhabitants within. I distinctly heard a person say "*Noko, noko,*" or, "No, no; don't, don't," and voices of several persons mumbling

in so low a tone as to preclude my comprehending a single sentence. At length a heavy substance was thrown out, and fell on the ground not many yards from where I stood. It seemed to be a body—whether dead or alive I could not tell. I thought that presently some one would come out of the house to remove the victim, to do which a circuit must be made. To be caught there, I was sure, would in such a case be dangerous to me; yet I was anxious to know if the body were lifeless, and whether that of man or woman. I felt the head, and the length and quantity of hair convinced me it was a woman's, and I fancied it breathed. All this was the affair of a moment. Lifting up the body, I threw it across my shoulders, and hastened to the river. There, by applying water to the temples, and wetting the mouth and lips of the unfortunate creature, I found to a certainty that she breathed, and rejoiced greatly at my success. I was again taking up my burthen to get to some place more secure, when I saw lights in the direction of the house I had just quitted. Not a moment must be lost. I boldly dashed into the river with the suffering female, and succeeded in gaining the opposite bank in safety. There was a straw stack near, and implements of husbandry. I conveyed the sufferer to the further side, to secure the less chance of discovery from her pursuers. I made the easiest bed I could for her with such materials, laid her on it, and crept cautiously round to observe the motions of the persons in search.

I now saw lights approach the river, and come down immediately to the bank opposite me. These lights, far from being of service to those in pursuit, only served to exhibit them to the pursued. I plainly saw some of them were Gosseins, and more than once fancied that one of them was the wretch Gabbage Gousla. "Surely earth never before bred such a fiend!" thought I; "his life seems spent in deeds of crime the most atrocious!" They were now close on the opposite bank of the river, and I could distinctly hear them speak. "She must be dead," said Gabbage; for it was he in truth. "If strangling did not destroy her, the fall from the window must have done so," said a second voice; "and even if she plunged into the river, after being able to reach it, she is drowned." "But what must we tell Trimbuckje Danglia?" said Gabbage. "Why, tell him the deed is done!" "But, if she appear again?" "Why, then," said Gabbage, "woe be to us! But we stay too long here dallying; some one may discover us. Vishnu save us from Habeshee Kotwall, the police-master!" They then moved off, and I sneaked back to my charge, who seemed getting to herself rapidly. I dreaded the approach of day, but did not deem it prudent to rest until I had found some hut where I might deposit the woman whom fortune had thus flung in my way. I proceeded to the first village, and tapped at the door of a hut, when a voice within answered, "*Koun hue?*" Who is there? I

requested succour for a poor half-murdered woman, assuring the speaker he should be rewarded if he admitted her. The owner opened the door, and begged I would not saddle him with my difficulties—that he had no money to bribe his way at court should he be accused. I assured him there was no danger, and he reluctantly consented to accompany me to the place where the unfortunate female lay. We lifted her up, and conveyed her to the cottage, where he promised he would take every care of her, and if possible keep it a profound secret that he had such a charge under his care. I gave him a rupee, not having more than five for myself, and promised him I would return in the evening, directing him what to do for the female, and to keep her on a soft bed, by which means she would recover quicker.

I hastened back to the city, that I might be there before the morning dawned. I reached it long before the shops were opened, and sat down outside a grain-dealer's shop. He opened his house soon after sunrise, and accosted me with "Holla, brother! what, so early in the markets!" "Indeed," I replied, "it is from necessity; not having eaten anything yesterday, I am famished, and require a *pylee** of rice." He eyed me in a curious way, measured out the rice, took my money, but said not a syllable. I cooked my rice in a shed not far off, and then proceeded into the heart of the city. On arriving at the palace, I

* A measure.

perceived a woman bathed in tears, beating her breast, and crying aloud for justice. I inquired of the bystanders what she wanted, and why she was so overwhelmed with grief. They replied "that she was crying for justice, as her niece, there was good reason to think, had been murdered; she was at any rate carried off, and robbed of her ornaments." It immediately struck me that her niece was the unhappy girl under my protection. I considered it impolitic to approach the old woman; but waited for more information as to the particulars of the transaction. It appeared her cries had reached the ear of the Peeshwa, who was informed of the cause. Habeshee Kotwall was summoned to his presence, and while so closeted I thought I would take the opportunity of asking something about this just and able superintendent of police at Poona. Habeshee* Kotwall was so called from his birthplace and police situation combined. He was born an Abyssinian, and a most ferocious villain he was in personal appearance. He had once been a jummahdar in the army, where he had signalised himself by brutal courage. At the termination of the war he was provided for by having a civil situation given to him, and was reported to be in great favour with the Peeshwa, over whom he had at one time a great ascendency. How far he would have gone in this respect,

* Abyssinians are called in India, Habeshees. Habesh is the native name of Abyssinia. Habeshee means a native of Habesh, or, for shortness, Habshee.

it is not easy to say, had he not been supplanted by a still greater villain than himself, Trimbuckje Danglia, who, from the meanest court office, pushed himself into the place of slipper-bearer to the Peeshwa, which situation he held for ten years, and then rose to be sword-bearer. From this time, he, being constantly about the person of the imbecile Peeshwa, contrived to supersede Habeshee Kotwall. Between these rivals the bitterest hatred existed, though it was a hatred mixed with mutual fear. When they met in the street, they eyed each other with deep venom. One stood for ever in the other's way to preferment. Insinuations were constantly poured into the Peeshwa's ear by Trimbuckje against Habeshee, and in the reverse way by the latter. But both being considered useful men, little attention was paid to their mutual malice and its results. Habeshee was the dread of the whole city; a herd of wild beasts could not cause it more terror. The woolly-headed Trimbuckje was little less feared than Habeshee. The only difference was that the latter carried on his nefarious practices at a distance, while the former did his in the very eyes of the Peeshwa. Habeshee was an open and avowed rogue: Trimbuckje was sly and designing; a cool, relentless murderer. He had been employed, as some said, in that very capacity by the Peeshwa himself, who often found it convenient to get troublesome subjects out of the way.

While Habeshee was closeted with the Peeshwa, the

"*aswary*," or suite of Trimbuckje, arrived at the palace. He himself was informed ere he alighted from his horse that Habeshee was closeted with the Peeshwa. His anger, as if not conspicuous enough in his face, made his fingers tingle till they grasped his sword-hilt. Had Habeshee been near, he could hardly have escaped. I learned afterwards the cause of his anger on this occasion. Proclamations were issued and rewards offered for the discovery of a girl, named Sagoonah, who had mysteriously disappeared. The police and Habeshee were on the alert. I could not fathom the reason why the Habeshee evinced such extraordinary zeal on the occasion. I was also more at a loss to account for Badjeroa, the Peeshwa, taking up the affair so seriously as to interfere personally. But why did Trimbuckje evince such anger on finding Habeshee with the Peeshwa? I could only at last solve the doubt by recalling the words of Gabbage the night of the intended murder; and I became convinced that Trimbuckje was implicated in that black affair. The Habeshee might be aware of his rival's guilt, and desirous of bringing it home to him, and working his downfall.

It soon struck me that all my conjectures might be verified or falsified by Sagoonah herself; and I proceeded to the village where I had left her; for Sagoonah, I had no doubt, it was that I had rescued. She was still senseless; and I removed from her throat a small bead-necklace, the only ornament remaining upon her, in order to relieve her

throat, which bore the marks of the fingers of those who had attempted to destroy her. Suspended to the necklace was a copper box or talisman, in which a gold rupee was probably deposited, or some other trifle, as is customary among Mahratta women. Of this necklace I took great care, as likely to afford a cue to the elucidation of the affair. In the evening the female recovered her speech, but not sufficiently to relate her story. She was a most beautiful girl, and I became much interested in her restoration.

I now went again to the city, and found that Habeshee had gathered together, from all quarters, magicians, conjurors, and astrologers, offering high rewards, in the name of the Peeshwa, to any one who should discover the murderers of Sagoonah. The idea of personating a magician instantly struck me; but, first, it was necessary to know a little more myself, before I could pretend to give information to others; and, secondly, to choose what party I should serve—the Habeshee or Trimbuckje; so that I might turn my art to the best advantage. I also became more anxious for Sagoonah's recovery, and returned to her immediately; I found her better, and able to speak. Her first inquiry was how she came to the cottage. I explained every minute particular to her, and impressed upon her mind the danger of appearing in Poona, and that her enemies would now, more than ever, seek to destroy her. She was convinced by my reasoning; and I begged

her to inform me how she got into the hands of the villains from whom I rescued her.

'She sat up, and began, as well as her strength would permit, to state as follows:—"My name is Sagoonah: my father was a merchant, who failed, and shortly after died. My mother followed him as a *suttee*,* from which nothing could deter her; she died on the funeral pile. I had been betrothed several years before my parents died; but the boy who was to have been my husband left Poona with his father, and was never again heard of. I was, therefore, excluded from entering into any new alliance, and have lived ever since with my aunt, my father's sister, in a retired part of the city, near the Motee Baugh or Park Garden, where there is a pleasure-house belonging to the Peeshwa. One day, Badjerao came to the garden; and I, being anxious to see the royal cavalcade, exposed myself at the window, not thinking the misery I entailed upon myself by so doing. As the Peeshwa returned, he looked up at the window, where I was again posted to see him return. Evening arrived; I had thought no more of the Peeshwa and his elephants. My aunt was unfortunately absent, having gone to a village at some distance to remain two days. While I sat alone, a man, muffled up, entered the house; and, after flattering me, declared he came from the Peeshwa, who, having seen me, had become enamoured of my person, and was anxious to place me in his harem.

* A widow who burns herself on her husband's death.

I refused the honour, and said I would rather die than consent to it. He then left me, saying, I should soon hear more. The following morning Trimbuckje Danglia came: I was aware of the purport of his visit, and knew he was the pander for his master; so I covered my face with my shawl. He began proclaiming his master's liberality, the number of ornaments his women wore, and which he had bestowed upon them. I refused the offer sternly, as before, and in my earnestness let fall the covering from my face. Trimbuckje gazed a moment in silence at me, and then audaciously made the same kind of proposal for himself. He offered to convey me to his village in Kandeish, and to deceive the Peeshwa by a report of my flight from Poona. I replied scornfully, 'The Peeshwa shall know this before sunset; I will expose you to his resentment. Leave me!' He went away, muttering curses. I determined to inform the Peeshwa of his conduct; and in the evening was proceeding to the palace for the purpose, when a boy overtook me, and inquired if my name was Sagoonah. I told him yes; and he then said, 'You must come with me; your aunt is dying in a house in the suburbs, and has sent me for you.' This scheme answered too well. I followed him to the dwelling whence you took me, and was surrounded instantly by four Gosseins, who attempted to strangle me, having robbed me of all my ornaments, and then threw me out of the window—the rest of my story you know. I have not a doubt but the

Gosseins were agents of Trimbuckje, who wished to prevent my informing his master of his conduct."

In return, I told her I thought she was mistaken; for I had motives for not agreeing in her too correct opinion. It was dangerous for me to let any one know of what I was informed; and, next, I had not determined whether Habeshee or Trimbuckje should be the victim of my magical skill. I had settled in my own mind to enter the service of the survivor; and I had therefore to consider who was likely to remain longest in power. The inhabitants of Poona, I well knew, only waited for an opportunity to ruin Habeshee. If, then, I could make it appear he was directly or indirectly concerned in the murder of Sagoonah, that crime, and the other complaints that would pour in upon him, must effectually crush him. To ruin him, I must have access to Trimbuckje, and secure half the reward offered, and a promise of being retained in his service. The disguise I should put on to act the magician would, when removed, prevent any recognition of my person. Before I proceeded in my plan, I thought of Sagoonah, with whom I was deeply enamoured, and determined, if possible, to sue for her hand. "But will she consent," thought I, "if I am in the service of the villain Trimbuckje?" These considerations induced me to shake her opinion, that he was her persecutor, and to fix it upon Habeshee, who had inveigled her to the house, that he might rob her of her ornaments.

CHAPTER IX.

I NOW entered Poona again, and proceeded to Trimbuckje's residence, begging a conference with the owner, as having something important to communicate. I was desired to wait in the verandah. At length I was informed Trimbuckje would see me, but that I must submit to be disarmed. I readily assented, and gave up my dagger. I then followed a servant up and down several very narrow staircases, one after another, until I came to a door half open; and saw Trimbuckje sitting cross-legged on the floor, with papers before him, and a large figure of Gunputty, with the elephant's trunk, fastened to the wall over his head. His hookah stood beside him, and he wore a sort of skull cap, with a muslin coat and short breeches. His two-edged sword lay near him, and before him an unsheathed dagger. I bowed to this "prince of darkness," whose complexion was of the colour of his heart. He desired the servant to withdraw, and told me to shut the door and sit down. Having obeyed, he began by saying, he supposed, that, having pushed my interest with Habeshee Kotwall and failed, I was come to solicit his assistance to aid me at court. I replied, "No, my lord; I am come to make

proposals for crushing this Habeshee so effectually, that no one will ever apply again for *his* interest there." Trimbuckje's eyes brightened as he looked me full in the face, and doubtingly inquired if I could really accomplish what I proposed? I told him I could, and he desired me to name my terms. I told him four thousand rupees were offered to bring home the murder of Sagoonah to the guilty party; and I ought to have double if I bring the charge home to a man innocent of it. "Innocent!" said he; "is not Habeshee guilty of the crime?" "I know he is not," I answered, looking him full in the face at the time; "and I know who is." Trimbuckje cast down his eyes, and could not face me, but seemed inclined to anger. I bade him be calm; I did not intend to betray him; but I whispered in his ear "Gabbage Gousla Gossein;" from which he was convinced I knew more than I ought. "Well," said he, "you require four thousand rupees if you fix the charge on Habeshee?" I replied that I did, and a promise that he would provide for me about his person or in his village. I then represented how impossible it would be for him to deceive me; when, to show he was in earnest, he opened a chest and took out a thousand rupees, which he gave me in part payment of the reward. He next asked me how I proposed to act. I told him, in the disguise of a magician; that I should get introduced to the Kotwall; and if, by such means, I should establish my accusation, I intended to be allowed to

pronounce the result of my conjuration before the Peeshwa himself. I did not fail to urge that, before commencing operations, as many petitions must be obtained as possible by him, Trimbuckje, from the inhabitants, complaining of Habeshee's conduct; so that, together with my accusation, his disgrace and punishment must be certain. I also bid him mind, that when the Peeshwa gave orders to search Habeshee's house, a durbar, or police-officer, should have men in waiting, and a confidential person be employed to search the Kotwall's *gardee* or pillow, where he sits in his durbar, and bring to the Peeshwa's presence whatever may be found there; and that no other proof would be necessary; for, though not actually guilty of the crime imputed to him, he had been guilty of a thousand equally bad, and the public good required that he should no longer oppress the city. Trimbuckje was highly pleased with my cunning stratagem, and promised to fulfil all my instructions. I took care to carry away the rupees given me, and to take and lodge them in the cottage to which I had conveyed the lovely Sagoonah.

I must confess I felt some hesitation at first, and feared I was going rather too far in fixing on Habeshee the horrible crime of murder; but I reflected on the infamy of his character, his universal conduct, and his cruel usage of me, who had committed no crime: this removed every compunction from my mind respecting him. Taking, therefore, the necklace of Sagoonah with me, I proceeded

to Poona early the following morning, having previously provided myself with a magician's dress. I put it on in a field, that the owner of the cottage might not witness my metamorphosis. It consisted of a long white coat of muslin hanging down to my heels, and gathered in at the waist, so that the upper part appeared like an abundance of petticoats, and being new, rustled as I went along. On my head was a high stiff red cap, with snakes painted all over it. A red shawl, in the shape of a belt, was tied with a high knot on my left side. A long Persian kuttar was stuck in my belt, and a brass chain around my middle. I wore high-heeled shoes, and had a bell in my hand to imitate the Jungum priests.

Thus accoutred, I entered Poona, and sat down at a barber's shop, as if fatigued with long travel. The people that came in stared at me: as they well might, for I must have cut a most singular appearance. The barber asked me if I wished to be shaved. I replied, "Magicians, my friend, must nominate the day of shaving, not the barbers. If you would take my advice, my friends, do not allow a hair to be removed from your heads to-day." Saying this, I rang my bell, and cried out, "*Arry, arry, kuhea tegasta leta tula set buradia chugnhum set phraw aguhum;*" words in which there is no meaning at all. "Pray, sir," said the barber, "is that Sanscrit, or what language?" "May be it is *Jadoo*,"* I replied, in a solemn and deep

* Magic.

voice. The poor barber's customers took the alarm, so superstitious were they all, and glided out of the shop, one by one, leaving myself and the barber there alone. The poor fellow did not much thank me for depriving him of his customers, and begged me to leave his shop, or he should be ruined; adding, "If you are a magician, there is plenty of work for you at the Kotwall's *chowry* * in the market-place." "Fellow," I replied, "let those who want me seek me." "*Arry, arry*," said the barber, "I did not seek you, and why did you come to my shop?" "Dolt!" I answered; "do you think I came hither from choice—that chance led me? No; it is written in the great *Pudubmishtah Vcebeeshunah* long ere you or I were born, that we this day should meet. Your face was described in those mystic pages as accurately as if a skilful painter had drawn your features, and doubtless destiny ordained this day for our meeting, that I might prevent the havoc you would otherwise have made on the chins and heads of misguided men. Shave but another man, and you will surely die. The terrified *n,hae*, or barber, put up his razors and quitted the house, leaving me sitting and mumbling nonsense in the middle of the room. Thousands of people came in all directions to look at me. Even Brahmins were confounded. At last I heard a cry of "Make way," and the barber entered, bringing with him a jummahdar of police. I felt alarmed, fearing my schemes

* Police-office.

would get me another flogging, instead of heaping riches and honours upon me. The jummahdar, however, to my great joy, made me a profound bow, and begged me to accompany him to his master's office, he having heard of my arrival, and having a matter of great difficulty in his hands, which required my skill to explain. "Friend," I replied, "let thy master come himself; I rise for no hireling." Away went the jummahdar, and soon returned with Habeshee Kotwall himself in a splendid palanquin, with trumpeters, sword-bearers, and *chobdars*,* running before him. The air resounded with the vociferations of "Make way for the eater of mountains and the swallower of rivers—the mighty and merciful Habeshee Kotwall, Buchardar!" I could scarcely refrain from laughing at the last epithet bestowed on the most merciless of vagabonds. In came the most merciful, when, in a moment, awe-struck at my appearance, he bent down to the earth, and begged me to exert my skill in the divine art of magic in an affair of great importance. I informed him the day was not propitious—but in vain; he implored me to come to his house or to the chowry. "To the latter, if you please," said I. "I cannot go to your house, you are an Abyssinian." A *palkee*† was got ready, and I was placed in it with great pomp and parade; and Habeshee, not thinking how he was aiding the work of his own destruction, arrived at the office. I was led to the seat of honour, the

* Bearers of silver sticks. † Palanquin.

magistrate's own gardee or seat. It was a carpet with a pillow to lean the back against. The office or chowry was crowded to excess. I felt alarmed at my own impudence; and still more, lest one of the many eyes present should discover my manœuvres yet. I took an opportunity of slipping the bead-necklace of Sagoonah into the covering of the pillow, and felt certain no one saw me. I then demanded the reason why I was summoned there. The Kotwall placed himself near me, and explained the case, taking care to hint that Trimbuckje Danglia had been seen at Sagoonah's house on the morning of her disappearance. "This indeed looks bad," said I, "as respects Trimbuckje. What am I to receive for my pains?" The Kotwall said, four thousand rupees were offered by the Peeshwa. "Give them to me," I said; but he refused, yet had no objection to give me half, the remainder to follow when the business was done. I stipulated that I should be allowed to report to the Peeshwa personally the result of my incantations. The Kotwall agreed to this, and asked me where I would perform my magic rites. I informed him that any room in the chowry would do, provided I could be alone, and furnished with the necessary articles. I demanded a chafing-dish, charcoal, eggs, ghee, a living black-legged fowl, limes, and two needles, with hot and cold water, and some earthen pots. The collection of these articles caused some delay, and no little surprise, in the bazaar. I thought that a peep at the sun would help the

mystery; so, whilst the articles were procuring, I begged to be allowed to go into the open air. Room was made for me to pass; and then, standing on the verandah, I made an observation of the sun through a bit of paper with holes in it. Now and then I shook my head in a grave and mysterious manner; then I suddenly appeared to see something delightful, and muttered some sentences of gibberish. The populace appeared as if they could worship me, and numerous were the exclamations and praises of wisdom which saluted my ears. At length the articles I required came and I went to work, killed the poor black-legged fowl, and swallowed the raw eggs, burned the ghee, and stuck two needles through the limes. I then gave notice that the business was complete, and begged to be allowed to proceed to the palace to report it to the Peeshwa.

As I left the Kotwall's office, the Habeshee took the opportunity of whispering in my ear, and asking if I had borne in mind the circumstance of Trimbuckje having been seen at Sagoonah's house on the day of the supposed murder. To mislead him the more, I said, "Trimbuckje is a sad man," shaking my head. The Habeshee's eyes sparkled with pleasure at this, and showed he enjoyed the idea of ruining his inveterate foe. A numerous suite prepared to accompany me to the palace, and we sallied forth in great pomp. Arrived at the royal residence, the Habeshee descried his enemy Trimbuckje, and exclaimed in his hearing, "Now let

the guilty tremble!" Trimbuckje grinned a horrible smile, but did not deign to utter a word.

The Peeshwa, after some little delay, summoned me to his closet, and having bowed seven times, he ordered me to be seated. His Highness had commenced conversation, when a door, which I had just perceived, directly behind the Peeshwa, opened quickly, and was again quickly and cautiously closed. The shutting caused the Peeshwa to turn round his head, and ask "*Koun hùe?*" who is there? No answer was returned, and the Peeshwa arose, and, opening it, became satisfied no one listened. He desired me to report on my incantations, and truly inform him of the result. I could have wished for an hour's delay to collect myself, and summon resolution to relate the mysteries of my pretended conjuration. I had entered the closet with unshaken impudence, and, with unheard-of effrontery, was perfectly ready to answer all questions, and tell as many lies as were needful, when the opening of that door unmanned me; for, before it closed, I caught the wrinkled visage of Gabbage Gousla, though it was but a hurried glance. I could not be deceived; such a face could not be forgotten when once seen. Conscious of the deceptive part I was acting, I concluded some counter-plot was laid for my ruin, and began to repent the crooked path I had taken to arrive at promotion. The idea of treachery on the part of Trimbuckje, or a discovery by Habeshee, placed me in such a state of tremor, that, instead of conducting myself like an arch-magician, I

must have seemed an arrant fool. The Peeshwa was impatient at my long silence, and urged me to disclose the name of him who had murdered Sagoonah. "Ah!" I thought to myself, "that is the question; I must give an ambiguous answer." I therefore entered into a discourse on the science of magic, taking care to bring up frequently that, after the most diligent study during one's entire life, cases would occur wherein we erred; that magicians were sometimes deceived by the cunning of worldly men; and the study of the art was considered in those days extremely precarious. Too much was expected from students, whose occasional failure was by capricious persons construed into wilful deception. This often placed the character, and even lives, of magicians in jeopardy. All this time I was weighing the policy, or otherwise, of ruining the Habeshee, and whether it would not be better to accuse Trimbuckje. I feared, however, that the latter would exculpate himself, and put me to death for the false imputation I had thrown upon him. I had no doubt Gabbage was listening at some crevice, probably deputed by Trimbuckje, who was naturally suspicious, and dreaded treachery on my part; so that if I accused him, some counter-plot would be ready to work my ruin. Perhaps the visage of Gabbage was thrust upon me as a warning, to beware of my conduct as respected his employer. I every minute felt more perplexed. My joints weakened, and my limbs trembled under me; my head was in a maze, and I perspired at every pore. So much was I agitated, that the

Peeshwa could not help seeing it, and asked me what was the matter. "O your Highness!" said I, "the Habeshee knew this was an unpropitious day, for I told him so, but he insisted on my incantations being commenced, and these emotions are the result." "I tell you then," said the Peeshwa, "that if this is all the result of your labours, you may quake a little more, for by all the gods in the holy Védas, if you have made a dupe of me and the whole city, you shall be a clog for an elephant in half an hour, and this will effectually prevent your practising similar acts of deception again!" I said, in answer, "Most high and mighty Prince, I have not practised any deception, neither dare I attempt a fraud on your wisdom, or brave your resentment; as well might the traveller fling himself into the jaws of the tiger, or the feeble mouse defy the indefatigable cat!" "Give a reply," said the Peeshwa; "who murdered Sagoonah? Trifle no longer, or I shall prove the more cunning magician of the two, and pronounce that you yourself did it." Not a moment was to be lost, and I summoned resolution to accuse Habeshee Kotwall, in a very low tone of voice. "Wherefore," said the Peeshwa, "could you not have told me so an hour ago?" No answer could I make, but sat silent, in indescribable agony of mind and body.

The Peeshwa now said, "You assert that Habeshee Kotwall is the murderer; give us some proof, my friend, that what you say is true." "If your Majesty," I replied, "will send and seize Habeshee, in the first place, and then search

his house and office, they will somewhere discover a bead-necklace, having a copper box or talisman suspended to it, containing a small piece of money. This was the property of the murdered girl, and may be recognised and sworn to by the aunt with whom she lived." "Where, or in what place will this be found?" said the Peeshwa. That I told him should be disclosed to the person whom his Highness deputed to make the search, but first the Kotwall must be seized, or he would escape.

The Peeshwa then rose, and demanded, opening the door, who waited in attendance? The officer of the body-guard appeared, and received orders to secure Habeshee; who was, as he well might be, utterly confounded. Instead of seeing the ruin of his enemy, he felt it fall upon himself. This was a reverse he little expected, and falling on the ground, he uttered a deep mournful cry of anguish, which I confess pricked my conscience not a little. The groans of poor Habeshee, though totally disregarded by his guards, were music to the ears of Trimbuckje Danglia. He gave me to understand by a wink, perfectly significant, that he had despatched a man to search the pillow. I attempted to give a nod of exultation in reply, but, from my dread and anxiety, could convey to him anything rather than the hope of success. Alarm was painted on his countenance, nor could he refrain from making through the crowd to come near me. Had I been really a magician, the first use I should have made of my art would have been to transport

myself from this nest of villany. Trimbuckjie having reached my elbow, whispered to me, "Beware how you deceive me!" and giving me no time to reply, mingled in the crowd. He had scarcely gone when the Peeshwa strutted by me, dressed in his darbar apparel, looking like a gaudy peacock. When sufficiently near to me, he also said, with a look of dreadful import, "Beware how you deceive me!" Never was real or pretended magician in a more awful predicament.

Time flew on, and the searchers of Hubeebee's house did not return. I felt convinced some circumstances, which I could not foresee, occasioned this unexpected delay. At last I saw a man whisper something in the ear of Trimbuckje; who catching my eye, shook his head, by which I understood the officer had searched and found nothing—no necklace was forthcoming. When it was understood there had been a failure, the Hubeebee party were rejoiced beyond measure, and vented curses on my head, styling me a vile impostor and murderer. The report was soon conveyed to the Peeshwa, who summoned me to his closet once more. "How dare you enter my palace to mock me?" said the enraged Peeshwa; "am I to be made the laughing-stock of the whole city? Did I not tell you to beware how you deceived me?" A crowd of persons were standing behind the Peeshwa, apparently enjoying my confusion. Not having a word to say for myself, I determined to confess the whole at once, and throw myself on the Peeshwa's mercy.

I had just cleared my throat to begin a relation of the whole transaction, and all the circumstances of the murder, not fearing even Trimbuckje himself, when, on raising my eyes, I beheld the awe-inspiring visage of old Gabbage, thrust between the shoulders of two men who were behind the Peeshwa, and immediately in my front. I became speechless, and cast down my eyes, for the countenance of Gabbage seemed reading my innermost thoughts, and saying at the same time, "Do if you dare!" There was no resource, and I felt myself obliged to adhere to my first story. I therefore summoned courage to address the Peeshwa. "True it is, most puissant Prince, I have mistaken the spot where the proof was concealed, but you will remember I said this was an unpropitious day." "And so," interrupted the Peeshwa, "you shall find it. Guards, secure him. Ho! there, let an elephant be in readiness; we will show the magician how to come to a decision without any long ambiguous harangues!" At this moment the Habeshee sent word, requesting he might be allowed to enter the presence. His request was granted, and in came the Abyssinian, who, after bowing to the earth seven times more than he would have done at any other moment, asserted his innocence of the murder, and ignorance of the person of the murdered, declaring I was an impostor of the worst character; that I had agreed to implicate Trimbuckje Danglia at first for a bribe of five hundred rupees; "but," continued the Habeshee, "I scorned to take so great an advantage of my

enemy, and refused to give this pretended magician the money. I told him he might discover the guilty person, for him alone was our royal master anxious to punish." This barefaced lie of the Habeshee came upon me like a thunder-clap. Whatever hopes I had before entertained of pardon, they were after this utterly annihilated. Rousing myself, I exclaimed—"It is false; the Habeshee himself hinted his wish to me that I should accuse Trimbuckje, nor did I seek any reward beyond that offered by your Highness."

An officer now whispered to Trimbuckje, and he again to the Peeshwa, when the latter addressed Habeshee as follows: "Habeshee Kotwall, in consideration of your military services during the war, I promoted you to a situation in this city, with a salary and emoluments sufficient not only to maintain you, but to enable you to accumulate wealth. You would then have supported my dignity, and have risen to still higher honours. I regret to say that your passion for acquiring money has been so great as to banish from your mind the regard which you ought to have had for my service. My subjects have been abused, trampled upon, and robbed even within the verge of the judgment-seat of the court, built for their protection. Too true it is that I have now before me petitions from several hundred families which you have plundered and reduced to beggary. Your principal harvest seems to have been the ornaments of unoffending women, whom you have

forced into holes below your office and stripped of their jewels.* Now it is too certain these accusations are founded in truth; nor can you say that they arise from or out of the enmity unfortunately in existence between you and Trimbuckje Danglia. I say these charges are true: for though the articles we searched for in your house and office are not discovered, yet we have found chests containing gold ornaments and pearls, too valuable for you to have purchased in a fair and honest manner. In the present affair you have borne an active part, although none of the murdered girl's jewels were found upon you or in your house. There is a probability the bead-necklace may yet be discovered; and before I decide on the fate of the magician, I shall wait an hour. Whether it be forthcoming or not, the sentence I shall pass upon you is, that for your unheard-of cruelties and robberies, you be trampled to death by an elephant. To prevent your insulting me by a reply or extenuation, I command that your tongue be cut out on the spot."

This sentence was no sooner pronounced than executed. Habeshee was deprived of his lying tongue, and I trembled so much for mine that the bystanders could scarcely refrain from laughter.

It was arranged that one elephant should do the business for both of us, and the execution of Habeshee was delayed until the expiration of the hour allotted for the discovery of

* There *was* such a character as Habeshee Kotwall in the East, who committed dreadful crimes.

the necklace; during which time, poor Habeshee lay groaning and bleeding like a half-sacrificed sheep at the butcher's stall. I must confess that when he made so bad a use of his tongue as to attempt an accusation against me of ruining Trimbuckje, I was not much grieved at hearing the order given to deprive him of it. He could not now utter a word, should the necklace be forthcoming; for he might have urged the possibility, as well as the probability, of my having concealed the trinket in his pillow for my own views. It was therefore fortunate for me he could not speak; nor had he (and what fallen courtier ever has?) one friend to speak in his behalf.

The hour had now nearly expired, when a noise on the staircase drew my attention. "The necklace—the necklace!" was murmured around; and, to my great joy, I beheld Trimbuckje's messenger enter the room with the identical article. Sagoonah's aunt was in waiting, and we were again summoned before the Peeshwa. The aunt deposed to the necklace having been her niece's, as well as the talisman. The Peeshwa ordered the talisman to be opened—much against the aunt's will, who declared it would bring ill-luck and misfortune on her——niece, she would have said; and then burst into tears. "She is dead," said the Peeshwa, "she can fear ill-luck no more; let it be opened." While this was going on, I sat a little more at my ease than I had done all the day before, and began a mysterious mumbling, to attract the attention of the bystanders. I drew circles on the ground with

my fingers—cut one of them, and let three drops of blood fall on the copper talisman. Even the Peeshwa himself now wavered about opening it, and asked me if he should do so. I replied that, having sprinkled it with my blood, no harm could now result from such a step, and I would open it, if he gave me leave. He nodded assent. A gold rupee was discovered in it, and two grains of wheat wrapped in a scrap of paper, on which something was written,—this paper I concealed. I presented the two grains and the rupee. The Peeshwa desired to know how the necklace had been found at last. The officer of his guard came forward, and deposed that being commissioned to search the Habeshee's house, nothing was found there; and that he then proceeded to the chowry, and made the most minute inquiry respecting it. "At last I ordered all the household to be called, and explained to them that I was searching for a bead-necklace; desiring, if any one of them had the same, to deliver it on pain of death. The deputy Fèrash bashee (carpet-spreader) came forward, and said he had the necklace, and could produce it; that to-morrow being the festival of the *Tìl Sunkraut*, he was ordered by the Kotwall to sweep or clean the chowry, and put on the best pillow-cases, and that he set about doing it the moment the Kotwall and magician were gone to the palace. In fitting the new case to the Habeshee's pillow, something fell to the ground: it was a bead-necklace, apparently of no value; and considering his daughter would be pleased with it,

he carried it home to her. On my application, he sent to her to deliver it up, which she did immediately, and it is the same I delivered to your Highness."

During the preceding account I sat puffed up with consequence, and begged permission to retire, having occasion to go into Cabul, and to set off the same night. The Peeshwa granted me leave to depart, though he seemed sorry he could find no ground for subjecting me to the same punishment as the Habeshee. I got away, however, as soon as I could, followed by a crowd of persons who looked upon me as a god. The aunt of Sagoonah wished to approach me; and pushing through the crowd, fell at my feet, begging me to relate the particulars of the murder. I dared not undeceive her at this moment, and in public; I therefore whispered her to meet me at nine o'clock at the Mottee Baugh, or pearl-garden: she assented, and I walked away, followed by the crowd. Where to go I knew not, but passing the barber's shop again, I thought I might as well sit there until the curiosity of the mob was over. "*Arry*," said the poor shaver, "what again, in the name of Brahma, has brought you here?" Why *now*, I told him, I wanted to be shaved, as the sun had set, and no ill-luck could happen, unless he drew blood, when woe would befall us both. The barber now begged to be excused, saying his hand shook so violently he could not answer the giving a gash or two. This, instead of dispersing, but increased the crowd—all begging their neighbours to come and see the barber shave the conjuror. As I really needed

shaving, I repented of having so much alarmed the barber and conceived that if we could but disperse the crowd, the barber might still operate without shedding blood. I called out, "The consequences of drawing blood will be fatal to those who witness it, as well as to myself and the operator. Beware therefore my friends!" The rascals heeded me not at all, and there we sat—the barber trembling in one corner, and I half dying with repressed laughter in the middle of the shop. The greatest annoyance to me was, that it approached to eight o'clock, and I was to meet Sagoonah's aunt at nine. There seemed no hope of the mob leaving the shop-door until gun-firing, which would disperse them. I therefore called to the barber, who came up to me trembling. I whispered him, and inquired if he could direct me any back way to get off, and I would not compel him to shave me; that I could manage until the next day, and promised not to revisit his dwelling again. He told me that if I went into his back-yard and clambered over a low wall, I should find myself in a lane which would take me into or out of the city, whichever way I was inclined to turn. I followed his advice, he telling the crowd I should come back again. Heartily rejoiced at finding myself at liberty and alone, I threw off my dress and tore it in pieces, and also my cap, muffling my head up in my shawl; the clock struck nine,* and I hastened to the garden.

* An English clock on the top of the Peeshwa's palace.

CHAPTER X.

THE dwelling-house of Habeshee lay in my way to the spot fixed upon for meeting the aunt of Sagoonah. As I passed, I heard moaning and lamentation, from which I judged that the dreadful sentence pronounced upon him had been carried into execution. I hurried past the scene of woe, and proceeded to the garden. The woman awaited my coming. I took her towards the tank, and sitting down, informed her that her niece lived, and was recovering. I explained how I had found her, but did not inform her who was really the author of the outrage. Promising to be guided by me in the means to be adopted for shielding Sagoonah from the power of the Peeshwa and the villany of Trimbuckje Danglia, she was still most anxious to see her niece. I consented to their having an interview. She was overjoyed at the prospect of meeting her again, having concluded her dead, and she arose and followed me. We went towards the suburbs, and had just cleared the city when the night-gun was fired. We quickened our steps, and reached the cultivator's cottage. Sagoonah was much pleased at my return, fearing something might have happened by my long

absence. When I informed her who was my companion the poor girl burst into tears, calling me her preserver. She clasped her aunt's neck, exclaiming, "My beloved *mousee* (aunt), do I once more behold thee?"

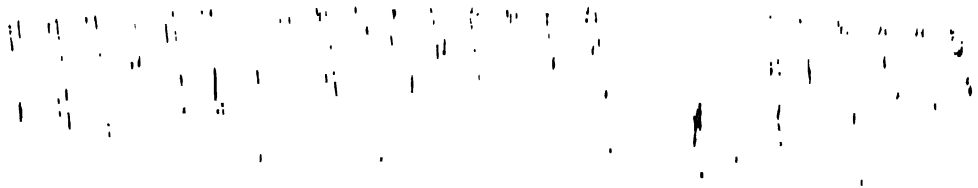
Being weak for want of food, I begged the coombie, or cultivator, to give me some bread and rice, and I enjoyed the homely fare with a keen relish. The lovely Sagoonah offered me water which had been just fetched from the well, and that with a modesty of expression that charmed me beyond measure. She asked who had been discovered to be the guilty men in making the attack upon her. I told her, the Habeshee. She said, she had imagined it must be Trimbuckje; and I re-asserted that the Habeshee was the person who caused her to be waylaid, but at the same time impressed upon her mind the necessity of concealment, for fear of the Peeshwa. I told both Sagoonah and her aunt that I expected to get a situation in Kandeish, and that the best way would be for them both to accompany me. I promised to protect them from all danger as far as I could, and that they had better pass for my mother and sister, as discovery would thereby be nearly impossible. The eyes of the beautiful Sagoonah showed how much she was pleased at my proposal, and told her acquiesence in the justice of what I said. Her aunt alone remained to be consulted, before the resolution was acted upon. In the morning we consulted the aunt, who approved the plan; and we agreed to set out as soon as I had secured my promised place.

I now went again to the city. I cut my mustaches close, and wore a white turban, intending to get shaved on my way. By doing this, wearing short breeches and a common white coat, I hoped to prevent any recognition of my late character of magician. While I was changing my coat, I found the slip of paper which had been concealed in Sagoonah's talisman. Neither Sagoonah nor her aunt could give me any clue to the mystery; for neither could read. The sentence seemed to me in a singular character. Neither aunt nor niece were aware that the talisman had contained anything of the kind. The former, however, recollected that the father of Sagoonah had desired it should not be opened until she attained her twentieth year. I took great care of it, determining to get some learned Brahmin to decipher the sentence, which was very short, and badly written. Taking leave of my fair friends, I walked to Poona, and passed into the city by the wooden bridge.

The first place I entered was a barber's shop; and, inquiring the news, the barber began to tell me all he had heard about the magician, to which he added a thousand exaggerations. He declared ten murdered women had been found in the cellar of Habeshee's house, and that the magician had smelt them when taken to the chowry; that the people thought the magician little less than a god, who had visited the city to rid them of so great a tyrant. He told me the particulars of Habeshee's execution; adding, that before he was tied to the elephant's foot, he made a

full confession of his enormities. I was much amused at this addition, when I remembered the poor wretch had lost his tongue, and could not, therefore, conveniently make either confessions or denials. I pretended ignorance, however, of the whole transaction, paid my two pice, and departed. Trimbuckje was at home, and gave me an audience. "Indeed, my friend," said he, "you were nearly ruined by your plan of the necklace. Had it not been found, the Peeshwa would have condemned you to die." "But now we have succeeded," I said, "I am come to claim my reward. Money I do not want, but some situation by which I may obtain an honest livelihood." "Honest!" said Trimbuckje, with a grin. "Well, would you wish to be employed here or at a distance?" I told him, for some time at a distance; but that I should hold myself in readiness to obey his instructions, whenever he should require them. He assented directly, and wrote a letter, to which he affixed his seal, desiring me to deliver it to Venkut Rao Bhugrunt, his collector of revenues on his estate at Kandeish. It conveyed the order for me to be enrolled as a sub-collector, telling me he could not then do more for me. In all probability, Trimbuckje, knowing how well I was informed of his villanies, was on that account more punctual in the fulfilment of his promise than he would have been otherwise.

My next step was to search out some learned priest to decipher the mysterious scrap of paper found in the neck-



Sagoonah should be persecuted by a Gossein? It was indeed true that she had fallen into the hands of my friend Gabbage, and but for me would have breathed her last; but this could hardly be the object and final intent of the warning. I thought it my duty, however, to put her upon her guard against those wandering miscreants, but still I feared there was much evil in reserve for her from the hands of these men. At length I reached the cottage of the cultivator, and explained to the females the meaning of the words on the paper. They were much alarmed, and fear showed itself in their faces. The aunt said Sagoonah's father was ruined by these wretches, who had vowed to persecute his race; but until the attack on Sagoonah in Poona, they had not molested her. The threat which preyed upon Sagoonah's father, and brought him to the grave, had been too little heeded by his relatives. "What cause of offence," said I to the aunt, "could your brother have given the Gossein?" She replied, "He brought him to justice for some crime, and the Gossein was punished, on which he made the vow. Sagoonah was about three years old when her father brought her home the necklace and talisman, given him, as he said, by a dear friend for his daughter; desiring the talisman should not be opened until she had attained her twentieth year. The talisman has been opened, and she is but sixteen—I fear for the consequences." I now endeavoured to convince her, that as Sagoonah did not voluntarily open it, no blame

could on that account fall upon her, and begged her to think nothing more about it.

I now proposed that we should set out on our journey to Kandeish, as I had secured a situation, and that we should not delay beyond the following morning. No opposition being made to the measure on their parts, I executed the necessary arrangements for travelling. I hired a bullock and ponies, and went to rest dreaming of happiness and Sagoonah; before daybreak we quitted the cultivator's. Sagoonah and her aunt were mounted on *tattoos* or ponies, but I preferred walking until the sun had risen. The bullock accompanied the cavalcade laden principally with the driver's goods, having nothing of consequence of our own with us. I had previously made a long bag into which I thrust my rupees, and this was all the baggage with which I was personally troubled. The owner of the ponies and bullock walked with me, and seemed very anxious to enter into conversation. He asked several impertinent questions, and once or twice it struck me I remembered his voice, but could not bring at once to my recollection where—so much was my mind occupied with plans and views for the future. He evidently knew me, and his manner and my taciturnity made me very distant with the fellow: my reply in scanty monosyllables did not, however, seem to damp his eagerness for conversation. He jabbered away incessantly. At length, after praising his cattle, he said "Do you know, I met with a very curious adventure not

long ago?" "Indeed!" I replied drily. "Aye," he resumed, "and one I have often laughed at since, too, over and over again. As I was driving my asses close to the village of——." He need have said no more to recall him to my recollection, even in the strongest fit of absence. I at once knew my companion, and accounted for his impertinent curiosity. It was the very ass-driver through whose means I lost my treasure, after my escape from the fort. I now made no attempt to interrupt him in a tale that so deeply concerned me; but was subjected to the mortification of listening to the wretch calling me all the opprobious names, and they were not a few, that his native tongue admits of. He concluded by observing, "I knew the rascal was after something he wished to conceal from me, so I stuck to him like a leech." Here he burst into a hearty laugh at his own penetration, and at the embarrassments of the poor wounded scoundrel. He clapped his hands in exultation, when he told me how the sepoys seized the villain, as he called him. He dwelt long upon the story, drawling it out to add to my mortification. I interrupted him by asking if he knew why the traveller wished to be left alone? He said, because upon seeing him come with his arms tied into Poona, he had questioned one of the sepoys respecting the vagabond, and the men informed him that he had money concealed under the mango tree, and that the soldiers had dug it up and taken possession of it. "At this," continued the ass-driver, "I

laughed immoderately, because, had the greedy miser confided the secret to me, I would have given him every assistance, trusting to his liberality for a reward. Instead of this he, in shaking off the cat, fell under the paw of the tiger. Was not the fellow rightly served? Was he not a covetous, greedy, mean, and ungrateful knave, after the assistance I had given him?" I replied he was certainly an over-cautious man, and inquired what became of him afterwards; the ass-driver answered, "He was flogged in Poona, and expelled as a vagabond, and I have heard nothing of him since. I should like to set my eyes upon him again to joke him for his cursed avarice." I said that perhaps he would not put up with such jokes and insults; he might carry a dagger in his girdle. "Then," said the driver, "I should be very careful to hold my tongue and make him a low bow—one would not be spitted for a joke, however good it may be." I told him he would in doing thus act very wisely.

To avoid further annoyance from this impertinent fellow, I mounted my tattoo and joined the women, begging them to keep their faces well muffled up. This caution was indeed highly necessary, for soon the troublesome driver came alongside of us riding on his bullock. He began to peep and peer at the females, and try to draw them into conversation. I here thought it time to put in a word, and bid him keep in the rear, his proper place, and when we wanted him we would call him. *Nuthoo Bhae nuthoo majee*

ghirrut teen tattoo, or "what a great man I am!" he exclaimed, and sullenly obeyed my order. I determined, the moment we arrived at Ahmednugur, to discharge the insolent fellow and hire fresh cattle. I kept my intention to myself, and we jogged on quietly, the driver singing as he went, and often, for want of some one else to talk to, conversing with his bullock, which he called *heera*.* The aunt now and then spoke to her niece to quicken her pace, saying, "*chul pooree chul*," or "walk on, hasten, my girl." On hearing which the driver sang, "*Ding pooree ding kuppal ā che bing, bing gela p,hootoon pooree gela oothoon.*" Sagoonah would sometimes say, "*arry mousee!*" (oh, my aunt!) Upon which the impudent driver, who had a scrap of song—a cant saying ready for every occasion, would sing out, "*Mousee tooptousee, tooput, purlee arle mousee.*" This was as much as to let us know he heard all, and was fully aware of the relationship of one of the women with the other, and then he would chant the well-known song of "*Chota Chota Muchulee.*"

At last the aunt saying to me, *O Bēta!* (oh, my son), the fellow vociferated, "*Ramje he bēta dra so b,hee Musselman ka sheeree-pooree k,hata n;hue maungtee tokra nanka;*" the meaning of which is, that a Hindoo woman was permitted by the god Ramje to bear a son, but it was a Musselman's, and the proof of its being so was, its refusing to eat the common *sheeree-pooree*, or Hindoo pap, and calling

* Diamond.

out for a lump of bread. This was extremely insulting to me, as it was intended to throw a slur on my caste; indeed, he might as well have told me I was only half and half bred, neither Hindoo nor Mohammedan. I became irritated at the insinuation, and riding up to him, gave him a blow which knocked him off his bullock. He returned it, and this exasperated me beyond measure. At it we went, each pulling off the other's turbans, and belabouring each other like two demons; the women were screaming all the time as if murder was taking place. At length I threw the rascal down, and kneeling on his breast, bade him ask my pardon, which he did very reluctantly. Matters becoming more placable after this, we continued our journey, the ass-driver keeping a profound silence. I now determined to send him about his business at Seroor instead of Nugur, and pushed on for that place, where we arrived late in the evening. Seroor was a cantonment of the English; I was therefore under no apprehension of a renewal of our combat. I now proceeded to a house appointed for travellers, where I left the females, and then went to the Kotwall of the place, begging him to procure fresh cattle for us, to be in readiness early on the following morning. He gave me a promise of them, and I was quitting him after thanking him for his attention to my request, when up came the Poona ass-driver, bleeding at the nose, his coat torn, and turban off, and bellowing aloud for justice. He complained of having been treated with great barbarity. I inwardly

rejoiced to see the fellow had been chastised well, as I supposed, by some one who had less mercy on him than myself. The Kotwall demanded who had beaten him, and to my astonishment he pointed me out as the person, and declared it was only because he sang and for nothing else, and that the two good-for-nothing women with me fell upon him also and beat him as he then was. "*Arry, arry basree,*" exclaimed he, or "what will become of me? I shall die!" The fellow made me stare with surprise at this base fabrication. I proceeded to explain the truth to the Kotwall; stated how the fellow had insulted me, and how we scuffled a little; but assured him no blood was drawn, and that it happened two hours previous to our entering Seroor. I added that it was on account of the fellow's insolence I had determined to hire fresh cattle from Seroor. The Kotwall asked where I was going: I told him to Kandeish; that I was in the service of Trimbuckje Danglia, and the bearer of letters to his head collector or *T,hu seeldam* there. On hearing this the Kotwall treated me with the utmost politeness. When the ass-driver saw this, and that he was likely to be sent away as he came, or punished for his falsehoods, he cried out, "It's all false, your honour; that fellow is no more in the service of Trimbuckje Danglia than I am: he is a runaway prisoner escaped from the English. I will swear I saw him, not a month ago, in charge of the English sepoys, with his arms tied behind him. I tell the truth, and

would advise your honour to deliver him over to the English general here; who will reward both you and me for so doing." I was now utterly confounded, as I fancied the fellow had not recognised me. Had I entertained a contrary idea, I should not have quietly put up with his insolence so long as I did. The Kotwall bade me give an account of myself, because, if what the fellow said was true, he must deliver me to the English. I assured him it was true, but that I did not feel myself obliged to give an account of the manner in which I became the prisoner of the English; but assured him I had been honourably released, and that I should have no objection to explain the transaction to the general himself. Upon this the Kotwall declared it was his duty to report the case to the bazaar-master, and let him act as he thought fit. I was helpless, and sat down in the chowry guarded by several peons, while the Kotwall went to the bazaar-master.

After some time the Kotwall returned, saying, "The bazaar-master was gone out to dine, and, therefore, nothing could be done before morning." This was an unexpected mortification, hoping to be well on my journey before the sun rose. I was alarmed too for Sagoonah and her aunt, and the anxiety they must suffer in my long absence. I cursed the malevolent ass-driver a hundred times, lamenting the ill-fortune that had thrown me a second time in his way, and a second time brought me into trouble. Patience was now my only remedy. I requested one of my guards

to send a messenger to the place where I had left Sagoonah, to inform her I should be detained, but would meet her in the morning. The man having promised to send the foregoing message, I felt more at rest. The driver petitioned to be allowed to go at large: which was granted him upon getting a banian to be bound for his appearance the following morning. The Kotwall retired to his dwelling, and I was left well guarded at his office. The night seemed dreadfully long, and, though fatigued by my journey, I could not get an hour's sleep. The morning at length arrived. Hour after hour passed away, and still the Kotwall did not appear. I was out of patience, restless, and disquieted. When ten o'clock arrived the Kotwall made his appearance, and desired me to accompany him to the police-master's house. The driver was in waiting to prefer his charge. On the accusation being made and the ass-driver's examination concluded, I was called upon to make my statement. I did not deny the fact of having been in the custody of the English, and professed my readiness to explain every particular to the general. The police-master advised me to make the explanation to them, because, if satisfactory, there would be no occasion for troubling the general on the subject. I begged that the ass-driver might not in that case be present, as I did not wish all the world to know my private history and misfortunes. My request being complied with, I related all the circumstances that befell me at the English fort,

with my escape and capture, and my release by the officer under orders from his superiors. The police-master laughed heartily at the obstinate perversity of the ass-driver, and the affair at the fort with Jane Bebee. He assured me he had heard all the particulars before from the officer who apprehended me, and was fully aware of the order having been given for my release.

My mind was now considerably eased of its fears of further delay. I asked to be allowed to prosecute my journey: the police-master consented, and ordered me to be set at liberty immediately. I then proceeded to the *durhm sallah*, or place where travellers put up, and where I had left the two females. As I went along, I began to think I was the most unfortunate person in existence; for that I never proceeded twenty miles, east, west, north, or south, without some unpleasant adventure—I seemed born to misfortune. I finally consoled myself with the hope of better times, and anticipated a quiet, uninterrupted journey for the rest of the way I had to go. On reaching the durhm sallah, I saw no one but an old Mohammedan, smoking his hookah in a corner. I of course concluded that Sagoonah and her aunt would be found inside the building. I went in, and looked around, but could get no tidings of the females: I inquired, but they were not to be found. I returned to the Musselman, and asked if he had seen two females leave the place. He replied in the negative. I was, indeed, at a loss to comprehend the

meaning of their mysterious disappearance. I sallied forth to the bazaar, making inquiries of all I met respecting them, but without success; not a soul could give me any information that might serve as a clue to discover my fair friends. It began, at last, to strike me that some treachery had been practised towards them while I was in confinement. My suspicions were naturally directed to the malicious cattle-driver having practised some trick upon them. I proceeded again to the Kotwall, and begged him to apprehend that scoundrel, mentioning my suspicions. The Kotwall immediately sent in search of him; but he was nowhere to be found, both he, his bullocks, and tattoos, having moved off. I imagined he must have placed the women on his cattle, and taken the road either to Kandeish or back to Poona, deceiving them with assurances of acting by my orders. The Kotwall furnished me with some horse patrol, and parties were sent off in every direction. I headed one that proceeded on the road to Ahmednugur. As we were crossing the ferry of Gornuddi, I asked the ferryman whether two women had crossed the river early in the morning. He answered in the affirmative, "very early," and told me that two men were with them, one of whom was a gossein. "A gossein!" thought I; "then all is lost." The boatmen told me they went on the Nugur road, and that they were on foot. I pushed forwards with my party till we came to a village, where I summoned the potail or head man, and inquired if

two men, one of them a gossein, and two women, had gone that way? He replied, "No;" but that a gossein had come there very early, badly wounded. He related that he had been waylaid by robbers, but he was ignorant which way the gossein had gone afterwards.

I now felt convinced that the women were somewhere in the neighbourhood, and begged him to let me have some villagers to search the fields and ravines. He immediately complied: and, with six sturdy coombies, or cultivators, I set out in search: they were well-armed with sticks and staves. After ranging the country for some time without success, on passing through a deep ravine, I fancied I heard moaning and cries of distress; my followers heard the same sounds, and we pushed forward to the point from whence they seemed to come. At the end of the ravine was a cave, from whence the cries issued; and what was my concern on entering it, to behold Sagoonah tied to a stake, together with her aunt, unable to move or extricate themselves! On seeing me, Sagoonah uttered a scream of joy. We speedily liberated them, and, bringing them water, recovered them from the effects of their fear and suffering, so much as to enable them to tell me by what means they came into that situation, and how they were left in such singular and painful circumstances. The aunt said, "We were greatly alarmed at your long absence; and I proposed going in search of you, when a peon from the Kotwall's chowry came to us, and told us you had sent

him to say you were detained, but would be with us in the morning. We were quite satisfied on receiving this information, and ate our supper without suspicion of the mischief brooding over us. At four in the morning the cattle-driver, and another person muffled up, so that we could not observe of what caste he was, came to us. The driver said, 'Mother, your son has sent me to tell you he cannot procure fresh cattle, and you must therefore travel on with mine. He desires that, to save time, you will cross the ferry, and he will meet you on the other side of the river.' I inquired who the person was that accompanied him? He told me only a *choomar*,* to show him the way, as it was not daylight, and he was afraid he should lose his road. Not suspecting any trick, we got ready; and, packing up our pots and pans, we accompanied the driver and his companion over the ferry. The latter was still muffled up, so as to prevent any observation of his features; he never spoke, and I should have judged him a young man. When we had crossed the ferry, I remarked there were neither tattoos nor bullocks with us; but the driver said we should find them at the village, about a coss distant. I thought this rather strange. We still walked on, but no village came in view; and I was hesitating what to do, when Sagoonah came up to me, and whispered that the driver's companion was a gossein. I immediately cried out 'Treachery!'

* A low-caste man employed as a guide.

and said I would not proceed one step further till my son came up. The driver then seized me in his arms, whilst the gossein did the same by Sagoonah; and they carried us into the sugar-cane fields, and from thence to this cave. We screamed and called in vain: it was too early an hour for us to be heard by any travellers. The driver then produced cords, and, tying us to this stake, began to plunder me of my ornaments. An altercation now took place between the two robbers about the plunder, the gossein saying the booty was his; but if the driver would wait until we should arrive at the end of our journey (not mentioning the place) he should be rewarded. The driver said he was too old to be imposed upon by a gossein, and insisted on his reward upon the spot. The gossein refused to allow him even a copper pot. The driver then proceeded to take all the goods he could lay his hands upon, and snatched at my necklace. Upon this the gossein fell upon him; but the driver escaped, and threw a copper pot at the head of his antagonist, which cut him over the temple, and brought a torrent of blood. 'Woe be to thee that hast shed my blood!' cried the gossein. 'Aye, aye,' replied the driver, that nonsense may do very well in Poona, my friend, but not here—here we are but man and man. If you do not grant me all I ask, I will draw more of your precious blood; for I know you mean to cheat me!' Then unsheathing a dagger, he plunged it into the gossein's side, who fell, as I thought,

lifeless. We screamed and shrieked aloud, whilst the driver packed up our baggage, tore off my ornaments one by one, and finally decamped. The gossein recovered in a little time, and found he could lose his sacred blood without dying. He at length got up, holding his side, which he tied round with a cloth, and walked away, saying, 'I go to a *vyd* or doctor, and shall be with you again in a few hours.' On his departure we continued to scream as loud as we could, but were nearly exhausted when you came to our assistance."

It appeared to me, from this account, that the driver had effected all this villany between the hours of four and ten in the morning, and had had the audacity to appear quite cool and collected at the police-master's to bear witness against me, hoping to revenge himself upon me most effectually—though he was a little out in his calculations; and when I was set at liberty, he lost no time in absconding.

CHAPTER XI.

THE impression produced in my mind by the events detailed in the last chapter was, that the gossein had plans in view which were by no means developed. The seizure of a few paltry gold ornaments, or the pots and pans of the women, were not objects of sufficient account to interest him so deeply; he must have been the agent of some other person at a distance, who had employed him there, and to whom he would have conducted his prisoners. Who this was it was not easy to determine; but it became us to lose no time in returning to Seroor. Upon our way back, while making inquiries at the village, we learned that the gossein had again made his appearance; but upon hearing that we had been there, and had pursued the track leading to the cave, he had taken himself off, no one knew whither. I was angry with the potail for not detaining him: he urged in his defence, that he had no orders to do so. It might have been expected that, knowing we were in pursuit of the fellow, he would have acted on his own discretion; but the fact was, the potail was awed by the sanctity of the gossein's

character, and had no inclination to get into trouble on my account.

We reached Seroor at last, where it became necessary to rest that night. I first secured cattle, and then purchased a good two-edged sword and a brace of English pistols, which I well loaded, as I was determined to resist, to the last drop of my blood, any persons who molested us during our future progress. Thus armed, we left Seroor the next day, and reached Ahmednugur, without experiencing any interruption, either from the insolence of cattle-drivers, or the intrusion of gosseins. Remaining the night at Ahmednugur, we started the following morning for Kandeish. No event worth recording happened, until we were within an easy march of the place of our destination. The distance from Nugur to Kandeish being too great for us to make one march of it, we proceeded as far as we could, and halted—proposing to start the following morning, and thus terminate our journey. We stopped for the night at a village surrounded with trees, which gave it an aspect peculiarly retired and pleasing. Finding the carriage of my pistols about my person inconvenient, and not apprehending danger, as we were within ten coss of our final destination, I unloaded them, and gave them into the charge of the cattle-driver. We slept sound at the village till the chirping of birds awoke me, by which I concluded that it was daybreak, and therefore called to my fair companions, and to the driver, requesting them to get ready for travelling. Sagoonah

hereupon observed that the night appeared very short; and but for the chirping of the birds, she could not have believed it to be already morning.

We very soon put ourselves in order for starting; and though it appeared unaccountably dark, we sallied forth from the village. It seemed as if the morning was strangely dilatory in making its appearance. Both Sagoonah and her aunt yawned, and were not at all refreshed with the sleep they had taken. I began, before we had got a coss from the village, to think of returning, and was opening my lips to propose it, when suddenly six men started from a thicket, and surrounded us so suddenly, that I had no time to draw my sword. The women screamed, and were terrified to death, and the driver fell flat on his face, begging that his life might be spared. The robbers soon got possession of my sword, and we now remained entirely at their mercy. Too late I repented bitterly the not having reloaded my pistols; but repentance was useless. They could take nothing from the women, who had been pretty well plundered by the gossein and his accomplice; but from me they carried away my long bag of rupees, being all I was worth in the world. Having got what I possessed, they next attacked the driver, who had only a pair of silver bangles, and these they forced off his hands with such violence as to lacerate them terribly. Next they stole the bells from the neck of the bullock, and the driver's coat and shoes, which with my sword and pistols comprised everything we had

worth taking; they then left us. We now returned again to the village. There was no appearance of daylight, though half an hour had elapsed since we first started: this was unaccountable to us all. I began to fancy the world was about to be for ever darkened, or that some mystery I could not penetrate had enveloped us. On reaching the village I went to the potail's house. He and all his household were snoring aloud, as if it had been the dead of night; it was with some difficulty I awoke him. At length he came to his door, and I told him I was a traveller, who had put up at his village the preceding night, and that, on prosecuting my journey, I had been robbed of all my property. He replied, "If you will be so rash as to set out on such a journey in the dead of night, you must expect to be robbed." "Dead of night!" I exclaimed; "what do you mean?—I heard the birds chirping in the trees, and felt assured morning was about to dawn." "*Arry!*" exclaimed the potail; "you have fallen in with the *T'hugs!*" Upon inquiring who they were, he told me a class of persons in that part of the country who lived by plundering travellers; and, to avail themselves of the darkness of the night, the better to conceal themselves and carry on their predatory schemes with surer success, they mounted into the trees and shook the branches. The birds at roost on them, being thus disturbed, begin immediately to chirp, as if it were near daybreak; and thus travellers, who are resting for the night in villages or farm-dwellings, are too often

deceived and fall an easy prey. I told the potail I was sorry he had not given me that piece of information the day before, and I should not have been a sufferer. He remarked that it was then the middle of the night, and it wanted full four *ghurries* * before the birds would chirp, provided the T,hugs did not again molest them before their time." I apologised for disturbing him further; but I could not help asking him if I had no chance of recovering my property, to which he replied, "There was none, and he would advise me to go to sleep, and think no more about my money, but consider I was well off in escaping with life."

I now returned to where I had left the females, and explained how we had been deceived by the T,hugs. Sagoonah observed that she had felt herself very little refreshed by sleep when I awoke her to proceed on our journey; and, in short, we talked so much of the deception and robbery, that to sleep again was out of the question. It was very fortunate this circumstance occurred so near our ultimate place of destination, otherwise I should have had no money to defray the necessary expenses of the road. When the birds again chirped, and we were certain it was dawn, we set out. Sagoonah advised me to go to the potail again, and as an additional precaution, to ask him if it were now really day:—she said this with a sly and arch look, of which I could clearly comprehend the import. We continued our journey further unmolested, and reached Trimbuckje's

* Half-hours, or near about.

village in safety. I hired a house for Sagoonah and her aunt, and took lodgings for myself some distance off, saying that they were my mother and sister. I then presented my credentials to Venkut Rao, who received me very courteously, and appointed me under-secretary, or deputy-carcoon, in the revenue department, which brought me in a salary of a hundred rupees a month. I resolved to live as quietly as possible, get into no disputes, and make no extortionate demands from the ryots or inhabitants, and particularly not to cheat my master.

Everything passed away very well for the first month. I determined to make proposals of marriage to Sagoonah, to whom I was a constant visitor. The aunt saw but one objection, which was, that her niece had been betrothed when a child to another person. I urged the certainty of that person's death, but in vain; the fear of uniting her niece with me, whilst the fate of him to whom she had been betrothed was undecided, was an insurmountable barrier to our hopes. I say *our* hopes, because the sparkling eyes of my loving Sagoonah told me, as well as words could have done, the interest I held in her affections. I obtained, both from her and her aunt, a solemn promise that her hand should never be given to another; and that if, in three years more, no tidings of him to whom she had been betrothed were heard, the advice of some holy Brahmin should be taken, or a Shastree consulted as to the propriety of our marriage. With this I was obliged to content myself,

very sorely against my inclinations, but there was no help for it.

I did not neglect to keep my fair friends on their guard against the "gossein's snare." I requested them never to admit one of the tribe into their dwelling, and never to be outside their habitation after sunset. They were also, even in the day-time, to be accompanied by my peons. They scrupulously obeyed my instructions, and for six months everything passed away as smoothly as I could expect or desire. At length it became my turn to go out into the district, to collect the revenue from the cultivators and inhabitants; and as we had lived so securely for many months, I had almost lost every apprehension respecting their safety during my absence. I informed Sagoonah of the necessity for my departure, and renewed my cautions, begging them to be ever on the watch to guard against treachery. I moreover informed them that I should not send even my most confidential servant to them, and that if they were summoned at all in my name, they must apprehend mischief. In case I should wish them to meet me at any time, a messenger should bear the ring I then wore. By these precautions, I trusted I should guard against the snares of our enemies—my fair friends promising to use every additional precaution that offered itself for adding to their security. I then took my farewell, with a foreboding heart; I fancied it was the last time I should ever behold

my Sagoonah. The separation came over my heart like a cold blight; and, in despite of reason and everything I could urge against it, I was overcome with a degree of melancholy that seemed closely allied to the despair of hopes for ever extinguished.

After I left Sagoonah I appointed a trusty person to give me immediate information should he observe anything occur to excite suspicion during my absence, and let me know, at intervals, how things went on. The hour of departure arrived, and I set off on my duties. Nothing worthy of record took place in the district to which I went; and I had the satisfaction of hearing all remained right at home some days after I had been absent. One month only, however, had elapsed, when a special courier came to me from Trimbuckje Danglia, demanding my presence instantly on a most important affair. So urgent was the business, that I deemed it necessary to set out for Poona from the place where I received the summons, fearing a return home first would occasion too great a delay. I despatched a messenger to Sagoonah, informing her of my summons to Poona, its urgency, and directing her to keep up a communication with me, if needful. On reaching Poona I found Trimbuckje and his household in great confusion, and making preparations for marching. What most confounded me was, to see his house guarded by English soldiers. I soon learned that Trimbuckje had, since I left Poona, and at the instigation

of the Peeshwa, murdered a Shastree on his way from the court of Guikowar in Guzerat, to Badgerao; that the English had taken up the cause of justice, as the murdered man was proceeding on political affairs in which they were concerned; and that they insisted on Trimbuckje being delivered over to them, promising not to take his life. Trimbuckje denied the crime; but I found that though he did not murder the Shastree, yet he employed a gossein to do it for him (Gabbage, no doubt), and that the Peeshwa had promised Trimbuckje land and a jaghire for life. Trimbuckje promised a thousand rupees to a gossein, and the latter employed a third party for five hundred rupees, and this third party, a gang of villains, who did the business for two hundred.

The Peeshwa was obliged to accede to the demand of the English, and to deliver up his minister, promising to look after his affairs, and to lose no time and spare no pains in effecting his speedy liberation. I found I was summoned to accompany Trimbuckje to Thannah, a fort in the island of Salsette, near Bombay. I was told I had come at a fortunate moment, as the prisoner was to set off that night. I should not probably have been required, but many of the sycophants who had surrounded him in his prosperity, skulked from him on the setting of his glory, so that only two of his retainers, besides myself, remained. Gabbage was left in the Deccan to carry into effect both his master's schemes and his own. I hoped he would have accom-

panied us to Thannah, and felt great uneasiness at learning he was not to go. Trimbuckje was much pleased at seeing me, and appeared to be in good spirits, though, being guarded by two sepoys, he durst not be as communicative as he would perhaps have been otherwise. I assured him I was ready to attend him anywhere, and vowed everlasting fidelity to so kind a master. In the evening we set off for Thannah, proceeding at the slow rate of ten coss only in a day. The names of the other two attendants who accompanied Trimbuckje, were Nanna and Juntoo, both old and tried servants.

As we proceeded on our journey, I felt miserable at the thought of what would become of Sagoonah during my absence. I dared scarcely suffer the thought to cross my mind, and had great difficulty to console myself with the reflection, that, if I did not like Trimbuckje's service, which, as he might be a prisoner many years, did not promise to be either agreeable or profitable, I could at any time quit him, and proceed where fortune might lead me. We reached Thannah on the day fixed, and were delivered over to the commandant, an aged and worn-out man, but very affable and good-tempered. He placed European instead of native sentinels over us, at which we were much pleased, as we could enjoy uninterrupted conversation without being understood. I found Trimbuckje not without hopes of effecting his escape, and he frequently said he relied on my cunning to accomplish it. We were allowed to walk in the fort every

evening, at which time the commandant's horses were led out to exercise. I should have previously mentioned that the old commandant had been removed, and was succeeded by a younger and more active man. His horses, then, they were that I saw led about the fort. One evening, being near his horse-keeper, I recognised in him my old friend, Nursoo, the quondam bullock-driver who procured me the peon's situation at Bombay. The recognition was mutual, and productive of mutual surprise. I dared not appear too intimate with him, lest the European sentries should entertain suspicion, which might frustrate all my plans for effecting my master's liberation. Day after day I met and conversed with Nursoo, and I hinted to Trimbuckje my acquaintance with him. I said I hoped, through Nursoo's means, to accomplish our object, and set him at liberty. He was highly pleased, and vowed to reward me most liberally, if it could be accomplished.

I found, upon sounding Nursoo, that, like most Mahrattas, he was very ready to finger the gold; and without being understood by our guards, we comprehended each other pretty well before we separated. I saw that a better man than Nursoo could not have been discovered to assist in such a scheme, and I speedily reported to Trimbuckje how ready and necessary a tool he was. Trimbuckje praised my ingenuity highly, and rang the old changes of flattery and reward. I conceived it would be desirable, nay, absolutely necessary, to obtain the co-operation of our friends in the

Deccan, and to apprise them as soon as possible of the chance we had of effecting Trimbuckje's escape. He himself thought it would be easy to send a letter through Nursoo, who must be trusted in the affair, and could easily find a messenger to carry it; and he determined to write at once, until I told him the very day and hour must be fixed, that his friends might be ready on the other side of the water with horses, or means of rapid conveyance. Trimbuckje acquiesced in my plan, which I contrived to mature with Nursoo, who agreed to serve us for five hundred rupees; two hundred and fifty to be paid down on the spot, and the rest when we reached the Deccan in safety. Nursoo was to accompany us. The two hundred and fifty rupees were raised and paid with difficulty, and a letter despatched to the Deccan to give notice to our friends.

The commencement of the rainy season had arrived, and Nursoo, as the nights were become dark, proposed that the attempt should be made then, and all was arranged accordingly. He told us we must be contented to remain behind, and that when our master was flown we should be released. I did not much like this part of the affair, but there was no help for it, and we acquiesced. Trimbuckje's bathing-place was upon the ground-floor, and he usually visited it every evening at seven o'clock. It was agreed that, instead of going directly into the bathing-place, he should strike into a passage on the left, where there was a low window through which he might get out.

On the outside, Nursoo would take care to leave a long bamboo basket-work covering, composed of leaves used by the cultivators of rice during the rainy season. Trimbuckje was to divest himself of his clothes, and using this covering, walk out of the fort before the eight o'clock gun fired, after which time the gates would be shut. To prevent the immediate discovery of his escape, I was to arrest the attention of the sentinel (who never intruded into the bathing-room, but remained at the end of the passage) by singing some Hindostanee songs, and conversing with him in that language as well as I could. Nanna and Suntoo were both informed of the plot, and Trimbuckje duly initiated into the part he was to take. The day arrived, and Nursoo found means to let me know he had met with a man in the bazaar, named Gabbage, a gossein, who drew him into conversation, and asked him his name. On hearing it was Nursoo, and that he was in the service of the commandant of the fort, he called him on one side, and told him all was in readiness on the other side of the water. Nursoo desired him to be on the look-out before eight o'clock, and then left him. That this was no invention of Nursoo's I knew by his mentioning the name of Gabbage. It gave me great pleasure, also, to find that he was not playing his tricks in another quarter, where I had reason to fear him more sensibly. Evening came, and Trimbuckje went to bathe as usual. The sentinel and myself were left at the end of the passage, and I amused him with some of the

songs I had heard from the ass-driver, whom the reader cannot have forgotten, clapping my hands to mark time and to make a noise. In a little while the sentry began to be anxious respecting his prisoner. He said he thought he was unnecessarily long in the bath. I said it was not wonderful, for the morrow was a great holiday, and therefore it was necessary to perform long and frequent ablutions. The sentry, however, was not to be so deceived, and pushing past me into the bathing-room, he gave the alarm of his prisoner's escape. Presently came officers, soldiers, servants, and lights from all quarters; but in vain—the prisoner was off. We were examined and re-examined; but we declared we were ignorant of the means by which Trimbuckje effected his escape; we were alternately threatened and coaxed to no purpose. I was immovable; but Nanna mentioned that Nursoo, the horse-keeper, was implicated. Parties were sent in search of him, and all the shops in the town were unsuccessfully ransacked to find him out. The prisoner had, indeed, effected his escape beyond the reach of pursuit. It was discovered that he must have actually passed the two sentries at the gate; though when they were questioned they stated that no one but a poor black cultivator had gone that way, little dreaming that he was the prisoner in question. His covering was found not many yards from the gate of the fort. Farther search was then made along the ramparts; and a rope fixed to a gun, and a pair of shoes were found, which

were proved to belong to the horse-keeper. Still opinions were divided as to the manner in which Trimbuckje effected his escape; for, on searching the ramparts the first time, no ropes or shoes were discovered; so that whoever they belonged to must have lowered himself, and disappeared, just in time to get clear.

The circumstance of a state prisoner quietly walking out of the gate of a fort is almost an unparalleled incident, and certainly shows the great laxity of those on duty, or it could never have happened. There seemed to me to be a want of the following very simple precautions—namely, the providing every conveniency upon the same floor that the prisoner lodged; having guards of an equal number of sepoys and Europeans, and causing the gates to be closed sooner as the evenings drew in, instead of doing so at a fixed hour. None of these precautions being observed, it is not wonderful plans should be laid, and a prisoner walk off over the same road that other persons travel. In the meantime, our scheme had succeeded to the fullest extent we could desire. Unfortunately, myself and the servants were still detained; but Trimbuckje was safe. In two months afterwards we were released. But my profits in the transaction were yet to come, and I had a long journey to travel before I could expect my promised reward—a reward, indeed, such as I little apprehended.

When the orders were received, and we were at liberty—Nanna, Suntoo, and myself—we found ourselves pretty

nearly in the same circumstances of destitution, and agreed to travel in company: we, moreover, were all bound to the same destination at Kandeish. We had not long set out before we deviated from the high-road, and travelled amid jungles and ravines. Being on foot, our progress was but slow. It was still the rainy season, and we were frequently drenched to the skin before nightfall. One night Suntoo called me aside, and proposed that we should again deliver Trimbuckje into the hands of the English, as great rewards were offered for his apprehension. Though I spurned the idea of turning traitor, I dared not express my indignation, lest Suntoo should watch his opportunity, and get me out of the way, to prevent my informing against him. I therefore appeared to come completely into his plans, but urged several reasons for delay before we put our scheme into execution. I said, "In the first place, let us get all we can for delivering Trimbuckje from prison; this done, we may enter upon our plans for obtaining a reward of the English, and get him in again." "An excellent plan!" said the traitor; "let it be so; and mind, we agree to share the profits between us."

We arrived at last within three days' march of Kandeish, and were plodding through jungles and ditches, when we heard the sound of horses' feet, and had soon cause for alarm, when a horde of Pindarees rushed towards us. In an instant they began searching our persons, and not finding any plunder, we indulged the hope we should be

suffered to depart, when the chief of the party ordered our arms to be tied behind us, and bade us follow the troops. Resistance was vain, and Nanna, Suntoo, and myself, were led like three malefactors by one of the troopers. They now penetrated a very thick bamboo jungle. A dreadful storm arose while we were in the midst of it. The thunder rattled and roared over our heads, and the lightning, shedding for an instant an intense brightness, left the darkness between every flash tenfold more deep. Now it seemed to run along the furniture of the horses, or from rider to rider, hanging about their arms, and standing on their sword-points. One man was struck dead, and another lost his sight. The rain came down in torrents, and the violence of the wind caused the tall bamboos to bend almost to the earth, creaking and cracking with a singular and at times a mournful sound, which added to the impressive effect of the scene. There was but one path through the jungle; so that to mistake our way, even under these circumstances, was not easy. After a long exposure to the fury of the storm, we arrived at the gate of a low and ruined fortress. Our party hailed its inmates, and we were answered by the sound of a large *nugarrah* * placed over the gateway. The doors were quickly opened, and we entered into shelter. The horses of the troop were tied up in sheds projecting from the walls of the great court-yard, and we were led up a narrow staircase, until we reached a

* Kettle-drum.

spacious apartment illuminated by a single iron lamp. A fire was immediately kindled, and supper got ready. The troop consisted of one hundred; fifty of these constituted the party with which we unfortunately fell in. To gratify the appetites of the band, a large wooden bowl filled with rice was brought in and placed in the midst, from whence all fed indiscriminately, and without ceremony in regard to caste. We were consequently obliged to wait until the Pindarees were all satisfied, and then we were told we might devour what they had left. To us, who were totally unaccustomed to such impure feeding, the idea of touching a dish from which an indiscriminate rabble had fed was inconceivably disgusting. We therefore refused the proffered honour, begging to be allowed a little raw rice, to cook as we pleased. Some of them made objections to our request, as being too indulgent. At last a young man, of a somewhat better appearance than the others, came up to me and said, "Be patient, and you shall have all you desire." I thought I remembered his person, though I had not a full view of his countenance when he spoke, and the chamber was gloomy and ill-lighted. I thanked him for his attention, and he went away promising to procure us the rice. On his return he had a lamp in his hand, and I saw, to my agreeable surprise, that it was my old inkstand-bearer, who had been of such service to me under my early protector, Sawunt Rao. He did not know me at first, nor did I give him to understand that I

recognised him. He said that he and two of his comrades were appointed to guard us, either within or without the fort. He told us we were expected to enlist in the troop and become Pindarees, and endeavoured to persuade us to agree, as a contrary course might perhaps cost us our lives.

"When you have eaten your rice," said the inkstand-bearer, "I will give you an account of the kind of life which I have led here." We occupied one corner of the great room, where we cooked and soon devoured our rice. The storm had abated without, though the rain continued to beat against the walls of the building. The horde seemed well supplied with liquor, which we learned was a prize lately seized from some bullock-drivers of Bombay. Orders were given by the chief of the troop that we should be secured in a small room, and that our three guards were to sleep in the apartment. We were accordingly conducted thither without delay by our guard, consisting of the inkstand-bearer and the two who attended us before. Both the latter seemed in bad health and low spirits. When we were placed in security, I made myself known to the inkstand-bearer. He was much surprised, and particularly anxious to know by what strange vicissitude of fortune I had become his prisoner. My history was too long, and contained too many important secrets for me to volunteer it in a public narration; but I assured my former friend that I would one day give it him in private. I asked who his companions were, and what made them appear so dejected. He replied he

could give me no information respecting them; that they had joined the troop only a month before, and one of them had never been observed to smile, or even wear an aspect of cheerfulness. At this moment Suntoo exclaimed, "Were there ever such unfortunate beings as we are, to be caught and made Pindarees against our inclinations!" "Indeed," said Nanna, "we are the most unlucky men in the world!" "I will answer for it," exclaimed the inkstand-bearer, "your misfortunes fall far short of what I have endured!" "And mine," said one of our downcast guards, "exceed not only yours, but those of any other person in the world!" "Mine excepted," said our third guard. Here the inkstand-bearer observed, "that as each seemed to be of opinion that he himself was the greater sufferer from adversity, the best way would be for each in turn to relate his adventures, and let the prisoners be umpires to decide the question. To this no objection was made by any of the parties, the most low-spirited of the two Pindarees saying he had no objection; and the other, that he hoped all who heard him would take warning from the follies he should show he had partaken in, and be cautioned against the villany practised towards him by designing persons. It was now urged, that as we were fatigued by our long march, and the night was advanced, we should first endeavour to gain some repose, and postpone the relation of the stories till the next evening; and to this all assented.

The following morning was cloudy and gloomy. I could only learn that we were in the Chandor jungles; but in what part, I was unable to discover. The buildings appeared to be of great extent; but as all the windows looked inwards, round a court, I could see nothing of the distant country. During the day my friend the inkstand-bearer, whose name was Mahadeo, told me that Scindia was befriending the Pindaree-hordes, and that, in short, a grand blow would be struck, by which the English would be driven out of India; that to enable them to effect this object, it was necessary to increase their numbers; and it was ordered that all persons that were met with should be pressed into the service, and be made to assist in attacking the common enemy of their country. My friend told me, in addition, that I had better make the most of the situation I was in; that my duties would be trifling, and very profitable; that I should only be expected to rob and kill, eat and drink. "A very honourable employment!" I said to him in reply. "As to honourable," he rejoined, "what is the practice of all our Rajahs and Mahal-rajahs, Peeshwas, and Sottans? Do they not call themselves the fountains of all justice?—rob, cheat, tyrannise over, and murder whomsoever they please; and that, too, when there is no necessity for such acts, when they can do without them, and possess means of existing honestly? Are not we now acting under their immediate sanction? Must we not live somehow? and what does it signify how? Were you deputy-carcoon again, you would

spare no exertions to fleece a poor coombie of a rupee in a sneaking, underhand manner; whereas now, you may go to work in a noble and manly style, more worthy the manners of the East!"

The arguments of my old friend, I must confess, seemed to me to be unanswerable; yet, as is always the case with persons so situated, I attempted a reply in extenuation, by observing how repugnant my feelings were to the committal of murder. "Indeed! my old master," said he; "and who put Hybatty to death? who hanged the carcoon, under the pretext that he believed him a spy? Under the rose, I got into a scrape about this same hanging exploit of yours, as you will hear when I relate my history to you." "Well, but, my good friend," I answered, "the two instances you quote were not cool, unprovoked murders; the first I hanged because I heard him swear by the holy cow he would have my life; and the second, in the dark, agreeable to superior orders." "And these men's deaths preyed heavily on your mind, no doubt?" he interrupted. "Why, no; in truth, I cannot say I was much concerned at their fate; but I must at the same time say, that I will never commit cool, deliberate murder on unoffending persons." "Well, then," he replied, "you shall rob, and we will kill afterwards—you will then be the genuine Pindaree; or we will first run the fellows through, and leave you to plunder them. This division of labour will make the thing more easy, and save you any scruples!" "I imagine that division of spoil forms no

inconsiderable part of a Pindaree's duty." "Aye," said he, "fair division or actual separation is the law among them." I asked his meaning, as not clearly comprehending the import of his speech, and what he meant by "actual separation!" He, in reply, drew his hand across the back part of his neck with a very significant look, which altogether I could not easily misunderstand. The only hope I could secretly entertain of escape was, that if I turned Pindaree I must be furnished with a horse, which would afford me the means, when opportunity occurred, of decamping from the troop.

The second evening came. The troop, as before, partook of their mess like so many ravenous hogs. We were once more accommodated with permission to cook and eat by ourselves. When we retired to rest, I reminded the Pindarees of their promise to relate their histories; and my old friend, Mahadeo, the inkstand-bearer, immediately began.

CHAPTER XII.

HISTORY OF THE FIRST PINDAREE.

"THOUGH I am at present but a vagabond Pindaree, I can assure you all, without any deviation from truth, that I can boast both of purity of caste and dignity of extraction. My father was brother to the Rajah of Satarah, though not the elder son; unfortunately another, far his senior, aspired to the musnud in case the reigning rajah died without issue. Nevertheless, my father was determined to assert his claims, and to dispute the right of his elder brother, by casting a slur upon his caste, and insisting that my uncle was the son of a Dobin, or washerwoman. His mother not being alive when he so sagaciously discovered this stain on his brother's title, she could not be appealed to, to decide the matter. Unluckily for my poor father's hopes, my uncle obviated the difficulty by producing, or procuring, at least twenty witnesses, who were ready to swear to his immaculate blood. This eldest brother had also a son, on whom my father did not look with a very delighted eye; he invariably styled my hopeful cousin the *Dobee-poora*, or washerwoman's boy.

This youth I never had the felicity of seeing; for, though about mine own age, he lived a great way from my juvenile residence. My uncle frequently came to our town, and was for ever involved in disputes with my father; and so miserable did the latter contrive to make him, that at last he determined to quit the part of the country where we lived, and retire to live as far as possible from his brotherly torment. Before he took this step he made a proposal to a high caste Brahmin to give his daughter to my cousin. My father hearing this, made similar proposals on my behalf. The Brahmin, fancying my uncle was nearer the possession of the sceptre than my father or my father's son, accepted my uncle's proposal in preference. This so enraged my father that he vowed the most dreadful vengeance on his brother and the boy his son. The ceremony of the betrothing was performed between my cousin and the Brahmin's daughter, during which time my father remained at home, and kept me with him, not willing that we should be seen after he had sustained so great a mortification. After the ceremony my uncle and his son went afar off to reside, as they had previously determined.

"About this period I discovered that my father passed much of his time rapt in meditation, and I often heard him muttering to himself things which I could not comprehend, his arms folded, and brow heavy and clouded. He frequently absented himself from home all night, and on one occasion remained away three successive days. Upon his

return, I perceived he was wounded. He gave out that he had been at Indore for the purpose of meeting his brother Sevaje, who had requested him to do so by letter; that, returning together, they were waylaid and furiously attacked by robbers; that he escaped, but that his unhappy brother and nephew had been assassinated. My father pretended to grieve over his brother's fate, and declared he would become a *sunyasse*,* and retire from the world. As soon as he recovered from his wounds, he was impatient to set out; and one day, taking me by the hand, he led me out of the back door of the house. We proceeded through lanes and crooked streets into the fields, walking at a rapid rate, and never looking behind us. We continued our journey until night came on, when we penetrated a thick jungle, in the heart of which we discovered a cave. On entering this gloomy abode, my father vociferated, '*Ho! Baba-gossein Baba!*' upon which a weak, but hollow voice, answered, '*Hah b,hae,*' or, 'What, brother?' My father then uttered some words wholly unintelligible in my ears, on which an aged gossein opened a small wicket, and let us in. Immediately on entering, my father fell down prostrate and kissed the feet of the venerable sunyasse, and made me do the same. The old man raised us up and gave us some rice to eat, which he had by him ready prepared; from

* Persons who leave their families and friends, and pretend devotion to some particular god upon the least misfortune. They are clothed in red, and wear high-heeled wooden shoes. They are also styled gosseins.

this I guessed that our arrival was not unexpected by our host.

"This sunyasse was indeed a strange being. He seemed a living skeleton, without teeth, and bent double from age and hardship; his hair was long, matted together, and stained purposely of a dirty-brown colour; his nails were as long as the talons of a bird of prey, and his toes were bowed inwards, while their nails furrowed the earth deeply at every step he took. One hand and arm remained erect over his head; in fact, the arm was no longer a living member, owing to disuse and the fixed position in which he had kept it for years, having vowed never to allow it to resume its natural, nor indeed any different position again. Pointed upwards from the shoulder to which it belonged, with its shrivelled look, it had the effect of giving its owner a character not belonging to the race of men—strange and supernatural. Not a rag of clothing covered his frightful anatomy, and his shrivelled and dried skin was smeared from head to foot with dirt and ashes. By these mortifications, he fancied he should propitiate the deity. My father beheld him with reverential awe, and I myself with inexpressible disgust.

"In one corner of the sunyasse's cave was Gunputti the idol, large, with an elephant's trunk; and *Mahadeo*, and *Parvati* his wife, were carved in the rock immediately opposite. I concluded that the purport of my father's visit to this miserable fanatic, was as much to gain instruc-

tion as for security. Having eaten some rice, the old man began to mumble prayers in a sepulchral tone; then to fall on the ground before the god, and keep dabbling in water. My father imitated him with the utmost exactness, and made me follow the example. I was heartily glad when these numerous ceremonies, and their still more numerous genuflexions were ended, as the stones on which they were made I found painful enough to my bones. A dead silence now took place for a full hour, the old gossein first breaking it by crying out, as loud as his crazy voice would permit, '*Sudasheo!*'* and then desiring my father to say, '*Bōm Mahadeo.*' My father did all he was desired, and then they continued for another hour calling out, one of them 'Sudasheo,' and the other, my father, roaring out 'Bōm Mahadeo,' until they were both exhausted. As soon as the gossein had recovered a little he rang a small bell, trimmed his lamp, and bade us follow him. We now entered an inner cell, where stood the figure of *Siva.*† The gossein desired us to do as we saw him do: this was to fall down nine times before the idol. This troublesome business being over, and when I hoped there was nothing more left for me to do, the old wretch presented us with a copper vessel filled with blood—whether human or not, I cannot say to this day. We were directed to take each of us a mouthful, and squirt it out into the idol's face. My father obeyed with great gravity; but when it came to my turn, I

* The name of an idol. † The destroyer.

was in such haste to get rid of the filthy mouthful, that I let the whole go, not into the face of the idol, but into the eyes of our preceptor. My father immediately felled me to the ground, apologising a thousand times over to the gossein for my conduct. I yelled, cried, and begged forgiveness, promising to hit the mark better next time. My father was told to repeat the disgusting oblation sixteen times, and I was ordered to follow his example. I succeeded, from fear, in getting nearly through with the total number, in despite of my stomach's repeated warnings. At last I was no longer able to subdue its rebellious impulses, and Siva received, not the contents of my mouth alone, but both together. Indeed, nature had effected wonders in enabling me to resist so long the horrid doses of blood, which would have disgusted a tiger. The gossein now set up a frightful yell; and my father, to appease his wrath and satisfy his own anger, once more levelled me with the earth. Siva, the destroyer, had been defiled, and it became necessary for the sunyasse to purify his godship. For this purpose he fetched water, oil, sandal-wood, and red ochre, muttering a prayer between each application. Sundry cocoa-nuts were then offered, with prayers and moanings; and after another hour spent in purifying the idol from the contamination I had cast upon him, the sunyasse conducted us back to the outer apartment. He now produced a cauldron, lit a fire, and poured into the vessel water, blood, resin, oil, ghee, and rice; he

then sprinkled brimstone into the fire, the blue flame of which, shining upon his countenance, gave me a full view of its cadaverous hideousness. So horrible and ghastly a being till then I had never beheld. Terror crept coldly over me; my heart was chilled with secret fear, and the hue given to the gossein's face by the brimstone impressed me with the idea of his not being a creature of this world. Even my father's hardened countenance bore an expression, if not of terror, of awe and wonder, at the sight. The sunyasse next produced a string made of horse-hair and fine cotton, which he dipped in his infernal cauldron, muttering blessings or curses, I could not tell which. He then, with a pair of tongs drawing it from the cauldron, bathed it in blood, drew it through his toes, and then soused it once more in the charmed pot, where he suffered it to remain about half an hour. Then taking off the cauldron, he poured its contents at the feet of Gunputti, leaving the string at the bottom of the pot, which he cut in two pieces, one longer than the other. After this, he formed the sacred string worn by the Brahmins, gosseins, and many Hindoos. One of these strings was designed for my father, and one for myself. He desired us to take off our old strings and cast them into the fire; and this being done, he invested us with those he had just consecrated, telling us that as long as we preserved them pure and entire, and never removed them from our bodies, we should rest in perfect security, safe from the attacks of enemies, and unhurt by the shafts of malice, or

even the incantations of witchcraft. He then presented my father with some of his own hair, consecrated in the same manner as the string had been, and he ingeniously, with his one hand only, wove it into my father's locks. This, he told him, was an additional security; and as long as he wore it interwoven with his own, all his schemes, objects, and desires should prosper. We now stripped, by his order, and were rubbed over with ashes from the fire over which the cauldron had been heated. My father's eyebrows were scored with red ochre as well as mine, and this, with large daubs of red paint on our naked bodies, finished at length our consecration, of which I was heartily tired. We were now told we might go to rest, and depart on the following morning. I was indeed happy to find a quiet corner anywhere, in which I might obtain a few hours of comfortable repose.

"The morning again dawned; but my sleep had not refreshed me. Horrid dreams annoyed me through the night. Idols, Brahmins, devils, and sunyasses, visited my slumbers by turns. I was flung from rocks and down precipices; now lifted up to the sky, and whirled about with surprising velocity—or thrown into black gulphs, where I appeared falling amid thick and bottomless darkness; now I was held in the hands of Siva, or grasped in the talons of a misshapen demon. One time I fancied I was boiling in the sunyasse's cauldron, and then swimming in a river of blood. These terrors, caused by hurried imagination from what I had seen, combined with an empty

stomach, prevented the refreshment commonly arising from rest. Well or ill, however, I was summoned early enough to attend my father, who had taken leave of his tutor, and now bade me to do the same. He ordered me to make my salaam to the holy man, and then we set out on our travels, completely metamorphosed from what we had been on the preceding day. I was much concerned to see my father in his present circumstances. Before, he had a manly, warlike appearance; now he looked a most mean, abject wretch, covered with filth and ashes. His hair straggled wild, stained brown, and his body was bedaubed with paint, while he had only a rag to cover him. I could not see myself. it is true, but I could fancy how I looked. The more I did so, the more I detested myself, and the profession on which my father had forced me to enter. We had not proceeded many coss on our journey before I formed the resolution of decamping, and leaving my wise father to enjoy the pleasures and profits of his new mode of life alone. It was not long before an opportunity occurred favourable for carrying my resolution into effect. We were met by a gang of gosseins, who invited us into a cavern, where they ate opium and smoked ganza, until they were all stretched insensible on the ground. Finding how profound their sleep was, I lost not a moment in carrying my intention of decamping into effect. Arising softly, I unbarred the wicket, sallied forth, and from that hour to this have never seen nor heard anything of my sagacious father.

"The first thing I did on gaining my liberty was to proceed to a tank, and wash myself clean from the paint and ashes with which I was plastered. I took care, however, to preserve the sacred string; and thus purified, and in appearance a poor cultivator's son, I begged my way to Holkar's capital, Indoré, where I served in his Highness's stables. I next entered the service of a banian, and then of a tailor. From them I went as boy to a carcoon, hoping through this last service to obtain a footing in the royal durbar. My court speculation, however, served me to little purpose. One of the carcoons, to whom I had made myself useful, promised to get me made deputy-foujdar, or under-runner in the police department. I bowed to the earth before him upon having this kind offer, but still lingered month after month in idleness. At length the place became vacant, and I entertained reasonable hopes of success. I never omitted an opportunity of standing in the way of the head carcoon, but to no purpose. I smiled and bowed, and bowed and smiled, in vain; he seemed to have forgotten both myself and his promise. I determined to remind him of it, and proceeding through the bazaar towards the palace for that purpose (for he transacted his business there), I saw a procession attended by the peons of the police department, and on inquiry learned, to my great mortification, it was the newly appointed deputy-foujdar, who had been presented at court, and was just installed into his office. This was a cutting disappointment

to me, and with downcast eyes I sauntered toward the palace, in the hope some other place was in reserve for me. I could not gain admittance; but was obliged to wait outside all day till the carcoon appeared. The only notice he took of me was to desire I would get out of his way, and I was forced to obey the command. Presently all my friends, who heard me speak of my promised good fortune, called me *boor ke luddoo*, or the great man's sport.

"Being now thoroughly disgusted with all around me, I went to my lodging, which was at a baker's shop. The baker's wife was scolding and rating him about money matters; and I soon discovered that I was the unfortunate cause, the wife insisting upon the propriety of his compelling me to pay. I approached them, and promised to settle the next day; how, or by what miracle I was to fulfil this promise, I knew not. The woman now lowered her tone, and the man proceeded with his business. I was additionally mortified by this accident, and sought my forlorn garret with no very enviable feelings. I now began to consider what I should do, or how evade my promise of payment. After much cogitation, I made up my mind to decamp; but to effect this with success, it was necessary I should avail myself of the present moment. Softly, therefore, unbarring the door of my room, I groped my way down the narrow staircase which led to it, and found myself close to the baker's chamber. I distinctly heard him and his wife conversing. Money was the subject; and I heard the

woman say, 'When we get the ten rupees from the lodger, we shall have a round hundred, you know.' 'Aye,' said the husband, 'but I fear we shall have no chance of getting them.' 'No chance!' replied the wife, 'if he does not pay us the first thing in the morning, I will claw his eyes out—that I will.' 'If,' said the baker, 'his eyes would sell for five rupees apiece, I would help you; but as they are not salable articles, let us be content with the gold buried in the hole in the inner room, and send him about his business.' 'No, it shan't be so,' said the woman; 'if he must go about his business, he shall go with a dozen rattans on his back, for I am determined to get him punished as an impostor.' This agreeable piece of information determined me not to await the tender mercies of the baker's wife. I immediately descended the stairs, and cautiously entering the inner room, I groped about in search of the treasure, and I believe examined every hole until I came to one where I thought the money must be concealed. I thrust in my hand with great eagerness; but withdrew it again with still more, for I had thrust it into a heap of burning ashes, which caused me intolerable pain. It was, in fact, a small oven, where the baker's wife prepared the light cakes, which were her exclusive manufacture. The pain I suffered was so great, and my right hand so utterly useless, that, though inclined to search further, I had not the power. With my left, therefore, as softly as I could, I unbolted the door, and reached the verandah, where I

thought I was beyond the reach of danger, entirely forgetting the dog that carefully guarded the outside. On my stepping out, up he sprung, and commenced hostilities by a dreadful barking; and set a whole pack in the street at the same unwelcome noise. I had not a moment to repent of the mode by which I had so thoughtlessly attempted to abscond. I stood still a moment, not knowing which way to turn or what to do. The baker, aroused by the barking, vociferated, 'Who is there?' Waiting a moment, and getting no reply, his wife began to scream out, 'Thieves! thieves!' upon which I made a bolt and ran down the street. The night rounds, alarmed at the noise the dogs made, and the cry of 'Thieves!' rapidly approached me. I dared not pass them, lest suspicion should attach to myself; but with tolerable presence of mind, I called out to the patrol, 'Come within, my friends, there are no less than twenty thieves broke into Mahadaje, the baker's shop; for Heaven's sake, come and help us!' Off they went, thinking I was following them; but I took care to turn down a narrow alley, and seek refuge in a shed full of cows and buffaloes. How I longed to be in the open fields! This was impossible until daylight, for the city gates were shut, and would not be opened until then. I had not long been in my place of concealment when the night watch passed, searching for the baker's lodger, who had stolen all the money, and decamped. 'The rascal!' said one, 'I wish we could find him.' 'Well,' said another, 'and if we could, what should

we do?' 'Do,' replied the first, 'why, take the baker's money from him, and let him go.' 'And give the baker the money?' 'No, no,' said the first, 'I warrant we should know how to dispose of that amongst ourselves.' 'That's right,' exclaimed three or four voices at once; 'but how has the fellow escaped us? It must have been he who called to us to assist the baker.' 'He is a cunning fellow,' said another, 'he quite deceived me.' 'He made fools of all of us,' said a number of voices together; 'but if we find him we will make him repent his knavery.' 'We shall never find him,' said a single voice; 'let us go on and search, however.' I now found, from the sound of their voices, that they were moving away from the spot where I had concealed myself, to my no small satisfaction.

"Before daylight appeared, a part of Holkar's army, commanded by Sawunt Rao Baboo Rao, passed by my place of concealment. Nothing could happen more opportunely for my deliverance. I waited until the camp-followers that usually flock in the rear should make their appearance. It was not long; and this class of persons being as numerous as the detachment it accompanied, I contrived, under cover of the dawn, to slip in amongst them without observation, and thus effect my escape from Indore. No one can imagine the joy I felt at being once more in the open fields. The detachment at length halted at a village about ten coss from the city; and when people had time to ask questions, I was repeatedly asked

who I was, first by one, and then by another; and to every person I told a different story. First, I was the son of a soldier; next, of a suttee; and then, of a baker. I repented mentioning the latter trade; for one of my inquisitors, first looking hard at me, asked me if I knew a baker named Mahadaje. I replied in the negative—for that was the name of him from whom I had absconded. The fellow remarked it was somewhat strange I should not know the chief baker of Indore. I replied that I had never said I baked in Indore, as I was never there for more than one hour in my life. 'What!' said my questioner, 'did you not join us there?' I answered, 'No; I joined you at the village about four coss from Indore.' 'Indeed! then it was at the village you baked, was it?' he rejoined. 'No,' said I; 'I sold liquor there.' 'Well, my friend,' remarked the other, 'I think I never was in company with such a liar before, as thou art! It happens that my uncle is the sole liquor-seller in the village, being the only man licensed to do so by Government; and as to your selling a bottle there —you would as soon dare to mock royalty itself to its face! Thus, fully satisfied that your tale of being a liquor-merchant is false, I am justified also in doubting the correctness of your baking-story.' I was now in utter confusion, and thought I could get out of the scrape by stating that I was a liquor-maker only, but feared detection in my brewing as well as in my baking. I could not tell what more to say to satisfy the inquirer, whom I heartily wished to the devil

during the colloquy, when I perceived a Mahratta carcoon unhorsed, and the animal running away at full speed. I did not lose a moment in flying to the assistance of the fallen man, and thus put a stop to any further examination. I found the carcoon much hurt. He was sensible of my attention, and desired me to keep close to him; by doing which, I avoided a repetition of my brewing and baking conversations. My attention to the fallen man was not lost, for he appointed me his inkstand-bearer, and I remained in his employment; so that, whatever inclination my inquisitorial friend might have had to renew the conversation and prosecute his inquiries further, he was too much overawed by knowing I was one of the lowest of the low on the ladder of power. I kept my situation as long as my master retained his, which was about two months from that time, when he was turned adrift for reasons which I did not learn. Fearing my old enemy might annoy me again, I volunteered my services as inkstand-bearer to a young, acting, under-deputy assisting-clerk, named Pandurang Hàrì, and was accepted. Pandoo, though not high in office, ranked among the favourites of our Maharaj Sawunt Rao. This was, therefore, protection sufficient for me, and I served without any hope of wages."—[During this part of the narration, the Pindaree gave me several looks, which no one but ourselves could understand, the other Pindarees not being aware we had ever before met.]—"I served this vagabond, Pandoo, for some time, until he also lost his situation by concerning

himself too deeply in a hanging affair, and he narrowly escaped the halter; but the fellow's ingenuity saved him. It appeared that he had buried some ornaments under his bed belonging to a man who had been murdered. These ornaments his principal in office, named Govindah, had ferreted out, and got into his possession. Pandoo gave so good an explanation of the manner by which they had come into his possession, and expressed himself so ready to give them up to the son of the murdered man, that he escaped; and the carcoon was ordered to make good the amount, which exaggeration increased from two thousand to four thousand rupees—thus, Govindah was a loser. Pandoo was sent to a paugah, and I remained idling about. I was wandering I know not whither, reflecting on the fate of Govindah, whom I hated—because, but for him I should have reaped a golden harvest, having spent two entire days in persuading a client what a useful man of business I was, and what interest I possessed, and how much I had it in my power to assist him. The envious Govindah came up, just as I was about to finger the cash. He threatened to annihilate me, and ruin the petitioner; moreover, informing the latter I was a mere cheat, who could not give him the smallest assistance. I was, therefore, the enemy of Govindah; and it was by my means chiefly that Pandoo got off as well as he did. Previous to our first engagement with Scindea, while we were in camp at Indore, some soldiers, dissatisfied with the smallness of their pay, and others dis-

concerted at getting none at all, were idling about the camp; I joined them, and heard the detail of their grievances, as they were making their mutual complaints. At that moment we saw a man stealing cautiously along, as if wishing to evade notice; he had a bundle in his hand, and his turban was tied under his chin—a sure sign he was going to run away. The hungry soldiers rushed upon him like ravenous beasts of prey, gagged and rifled him of four thousand rupees, which he had in a bag concealed about his person. I came in for my share; and what was my surprise at discovering, in the unlucky wight we had pillaged, Govindah the carcoon! He had escaped from prison, although his friends had raised the money to pay his fine; but instead of doing so, the mean villain was endeavouring to decamp with it in his possession. We were at a loss how to dispose of the fellow, when one of the soldiers, more ingenious than the others, called out, 'A spy! a spy!' This succeeded admirably; and, by a strange chain of events, Pandurang Hàrì was the person who issued orders for his immediate execution, not being at all aware who the man was. I took care not to undeceive him, for I saw the carcoon recognised me, and I should have to answer for being concerned in robbing him; the sooner he was removed, therefore, the better. I hastened the execution of the unlucky wretch, and he was hung up without loss of time. On the following morning, early, Pandoo was moving about the camp, when I unfolded the circumstance

to him of the pretended spy being no other than Govindah, whom we had both such good cause to detest. He desired me to conceal the body as quickly as possible, lest inquiry should be made into the matter. That very day was the day of the battle, and I did not anticipate any very active search for the dead man, nor any outcry at seeing a corpse dangle from a tree, when there were so many to be seen everywhere around. I neglected Pandoo's advice to bury the body immediately, thinking that, if necessary at all, after the engagement would be time enough."

The Pindarees here growing sleepy, as well as myself (for it was after three o'clock in the morning), we agreed to defer hearing the remainder of the tale until the next evening.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE next evening, being all seated together as before, the first Pindaree continued his story as follows:—"As soon as the battle was over I hastened to the camp, and from thence to the tree where Govindah hung, and removed the body. Having no assistant, and being too lazy to dig a proper grave for it, I threw it into a deep pit or hollow, covering it over with stones and rubbish. To conceal the corpse effectually, however, I found it necessary to descend into the pit myself; and I completed the operation, and was about to ascend, when I saw a woman turn the corner of a rock that hung over the hollow. I had committed no murder, but to be seen employed in such an affair filled me with terror; so that my whole frame shook violently, and rendered all my efforts abortive for reaching the upper earth again. I was paralysed with unknown fear, and my limbs refused to perform their accustomed offices. By great exertion, and using every mental and bodily energy I could summon to aid me in the task, I climbed about half way up the rugged sides of the pit, and made sure of reaching the top, when, happening to look up, I again saw the tall

female figure I had before observed; she was bending over the brink. I averted my eyes, and, having a tolerable footing, kept my position. I ventured to look again, and her form was gone. I now gathered courage, and was getting towards the brink slowly but steadily, when the haggard visage of the woman again met my gaze. Her eyes were fixed sternly and fiercely upon me. I continued to hold fast by the stump of a tree, growing from the almost perpendicular side of the hollow, for a moment or two. At once my knees began to shake under me, my hands relaxed from their hold, and down I fell to the bottom of the pit, upon the dead body of Govindah, which I had deposited directly under the place where I attempted to climb up. The covering of rubbish I had laid upon it was but scanty, and the body served to break the violence of my fall. I did not escape, however, unhurt, having sprained my right ankle violently, and received several slight bruises. Evening approached, and I still lay helpless in the pit. A thousand times I cursed my folly in again going near the hateful body of Govindah. Had I but buried it, in obedience to the wishes of Pandurang Hàrì, all would have been well. My approaching it the second time must have arisen from the fiend conscience gnawing my heart, and telling me I was indirectly a murderer! I felt this was the cause that actuated me in concealing the body; and thus the step I took to evade detection might end in being the means that should discover me. As I lay, or rather sat (for I had raised myself up a

little), I fancied I saw the flash of a lamp on the opposite side of the pit; but how it could come there I was at a loss to discover. Now it flashed upon my sight, and then disappeared, leaving all around as black as night. I never shall forget the horrors of that infernal den!

"The light now appeared again, and I could distinguish a tall figure, muffled up in a dark dress, approaching with that solemnity of step which indicates energy and power. The figure now came close, and I could distinguish that the light was borne by the tall woman whose appalling countenance had so struck me when it looked down upon me in the pit. I felt cold water run through all my veins again at the sight of her; I was as lifeless, as bereft of power, as the corpse on which I was seated. My joints seemed dropping asunder with fear; and a blow, like that of a strong man's hand, struck upon my heart, when a deep, hoarse voice said, 'Rise, accursed murderer! rise, I say, or dread my vengeance!' Had terror not paralysed me before, the authoritative tone of this command must have done so. I attempted to obey, but fell back again; my sprained ankle rendered the effort fruitless. The woman, seeing this, grasped my wrist with the strength of a giant, and pulled me upon my feet. She bade me follow her, and I hobbled on a few yards, until we came to a strong wooden door, not three feet high, through which she crept, and ordered me to enter after her. I obeyed, for I had no resource but to obey. She led the way to a miserable and

damp cell, and, pointing to a mat in one corner, bade me sit upon it. She then placed herself opposite me, and, after a short pause, addressed me thus:—'What punishment is due to remorseless murderers? What should I not do to the villain who has robbed me of a son?' Here she fell into a paroxysm of rage that relieved itself in tears. 'Govindah, whom you, miscreant as you are, have murdered, was my son—my only tie to this vile life—the being for whom I dragged on a miserable existence, which the sight of him alone made tolerable to me. Thou hast basely slain him, and dreadful shall be the vengeance which I will inflict upon thee for this crime. Here, on this earth, I swear'—— 'Stay!' I cried; 'I conjure thee, stay, and hear me! I am not thy son's murderer!' Speech, that had been taken from me by fear, now seemed restored by the dread of encountering something more terrible than I had ever yet done. I prayed her to hear my story before she imprecated the vengeance of hell upon me; and as she made no attempt to deny my request, I related to her how I came to appear under such suspicious circumstances, asserting that I told her only the truth. I went into my whole history, as I did here yesterday evening, and swore by the holy cow I had kept back nothing from her.

"When I had concluded, she remained some time silent, musing and muttering something unintelligible to my ears. At length she said, 'Boy, I will be satisfied—it must be so! yet, Heaven forbid!—bare thy left arm!' I did as she

commanded me. Taking up the lamp and examining my arm closely, she fell to the earth with a frightful shriek. I crawled towards her, and proffered assistance which I had no power to give; when she arose, crying, "Who can war with fate?—the witch's words are verified! I have fostered a viper, and it has stung me!' I requested her to explain herself, and excused my own conduct as to having willingly injured her. After some further time spent in lamentation and weeping, she said, 'There was a time, young man, when I loved you as my own dear son, who now lies cold on the outside of this cave; but for him you would never have lived to be the cause of the death of your preserver. This was predicted before you were two days under my care.' 'My preserver!—Govindah, my preserver!' I exclaimed. 'You were abandoned, young man, by those who stole you from your friends; you were put into a basket, and sent afloat in the wide river. Your father had scarcely overcome the loss of your mother, who died in bringing you into the world, when he was again thrown into affliction by the news of his child having been stolen. We found you, and he whom you have destroyed rescued you from the waves; he plunged into the river, and bore you to the shore—thus, at the risk of his own life, preserving yours. I caressed you, and gave you food and raiment. My son Govindah, on entering the city the following day, made his discovery of you public, or rather of finding a male child floating on the surface of the stream. Your father heard

the report, and had an interview with my son, who conducted him to my cottage; and he brought with him persons who identified you, and claimed you as his child. I had become so foolishly fond of you, that I begged, with tears in my eyes, as you had lost your mother, that I might be allowed to supply her place. Your father consented, and left you under my care for a year, at the expiration of which he intimated his intention of calling for you. He then departed, after liberally rewarding both me and my son. A few days after, Govindah set out in quest of employment, and being an excellent writer, entertained sanguine hopes of succeeding in the Mahratta durbar. The day preceding his departure, as we were sitting at our door enjoying the coolness of the evening breeze, Govindah smoking and I employed in nursing you, an old woman came and begged alms. I gave her a few pice, and, in return, she blessed me, but prophesied that the infant in my arms should one day cause me unutterable grief, and prove the destruction of my son. I ridiculed the prophesy, when she repeated, 'You foster a serpent in your bosom, who will return your kindness with his venomous sting!' I begged to know how I should avoid the evil, when the old woman told me to give her the child, and she would deliver it to its father. I now suspected the witch was an emissary of your father's enemy; and, refusing her offer, I bade her depart. She did as I commanded, and went away muttering, 'You foster a serpent!—you foster a serpent!' How true she spoke!

That serpent is now before me; he has destroyed his deliverer with his venom—he has stung his benefactor—he has made childless her who nursed his orphan years—he has made the widow desolate! O Govindah, my son! here is thy murderer!'

"The woman then gave way to a violent paroxysm of grief, while I sat the image of amazement and regret. After a little time had elapsed, she again resumed her story. She said that at the end of a year my father called to take me away, and she never saw me again after that time; that, from the circumstances I had narrated to her, her suspicions were confirmed that I was the infant that she fostered. On examining my arm, she knew me by an indelible mark I bore upon it, and her suspicions were confirmed. She told me, moreover, how she discovered her son. Many years had elapsed before she saw him after his departure from the cottage on the banks of the river, where he found me. When she first saw him, it was but for a short time, he having succeeded in getting employment, being made chief carcoon to Sawunt Rao Copal Rao, who was about to take the field. 'He brought to me,' said the woman, 'two thousand rupees to keep for him, and five hundred for myself; he then departed again. The next time I saw him he was a prisoner, confined unjustly, and a fine of four thousand rupees was set upon him. I gave up the two thousand he left with me, as much of my own as I could spare, and some of our relations made up the rest. With what joy did

I take the money to his prison, and how my heart rejoiced at the hope of beholding him on the following day at liberty! Alas! I was doomed never to behold him again alive! a report reached me that he had absconded. I have no doubt of his having bribed his guards, and that he was proceeding to me, in this my concealed habitation, to restore me my money. On this journey it was that he was surrounded, as you inform me, by the rapacious soldiery, and executed as a spy. I wandered about when I heard of his escape, hoping to meet him; but what was my horror on seeing him lifeless! At the very time the armies were engaged, he was suspended from a mango-tree. I had scarcely recognised him, when I fell to the ground in an agony of grief. Mine was a mother's sorrow; there is none that cuts so deep. A thirst of revenge mingled with my grief; I vowed, if I discovered the author of his shameful death, to visit him with a parent's vengeance. It struck me that those who hanged my son might again visit the spot where his body was suspended. I kept watch, not far off, behind the rock which overhangs the pit, and commands a view of the fatal tree. I saw you cut down the body; but I need tell you nothing more; you will not easily forget it. I can only say my determination was to keep you at the bottom of the pit until I could get you apprehended, being certain, from your last fall, you could not escape. I descended to the bottom by a passage known only to myself, and thus we met; may we never meet again. Go, and let the reflection that you de-

stroyed the life of him who preserved yours, be your punishment, and embitter your days in this world! Go, and let the great *Dum* dispose of you as he sees fit, when your lot is cast to die!' I was overpowered by the awful manner in which she spoke. I never heard her speak again. She arose, and, beckoning with her finger, I obeyed as well as I was able. She led me up a narrow stone staircase, between two rocks, which brought us to the surface of the pit. She waved her hand to me to go away; I fell at her feet and embraced them, expressing the anguish I suffered for having caused her so much misery. She again waved her hand for me to depart. After I had gone but a little distance, I turned round and looked, but the woman and the light were no longer to be seen.

"The night was dark and gloomy. Lame, forlorn, and unhappy, I walked or crippled along, I knew not whither, until the morning broke, when I was surrounded by a party of horsemen, who forced me to accompany them. These, it will be readily conjectured, were the Pindarees with whom we now are. I soon after embraced their mode of life, and have remained with them three years. Now, my friends, it strikes me you will agree that it is impossible any one can have been rendered more unhappy than myself, in struggling for subsistence through this world of misery."

Here my old inkstand-bearer concluded, and we all agreed fortune had dealt hardly with him. The other two Pindarees, although they were of the same opinion, yet declared he had

far less reason to complain than themselves. It was proposed on the following night the second Pindaree should relate his story. This being settled, we stretched ourselves on our respective mats, and were quickly lost in a profound slumber.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE second Pindaree began his story on the following evening as follows :—"My name is Fuzl Khan, and I am a true Musselman. I was born at Broach in Guzerat. My father was a Shiekul-ghur, or sword-grinder; my mother earned her pence by selling in the open streets the most dainty *kabobs** in the town. These luxuries were retailed hot to passengers and afternoon loungers, and so excellently did the good woman roast and fry them, that several Musselmen of consideration would stop at her stall, and partake of her exquisite morsels. At the time I mention, Broach belonged to Scindea; at present, as you know, it is in the possession of the English; and I understand kabobs are just as much in fashion there now as ever. In my early years I showed a disposition, or rather a talent, for stealing and deceiving, really wonderful for my age. Few excelled me in a stratagem for outwitting others, among youth of my own standing. But you will say that was not wonderful considering I was the son of a sharpner, or sharper, to come nearer to the point. My father was occupied all day in

* Pieces of roasted meat.

grinding, and my mother in frying; they had not much time, therefore, to look after me. I generally passed my hours in idleness, wallowing in the dust in fine weather, and playing with the mud during the monsoon. In such a city as Broach I did not want companions in my dirty amusements, and I was particularly fond of the society of a dozen young Mohammedans as idle as myself. I shall pass over my first years, and proceed with my history from the time when I was fifteen, about which period of my life I contracted a fondness for gambling. So eager was I in the pursuit of my favourite propensity, that I stuck at no means of raising funds to enable me to indulge in my love of it. My father seldom interfered with me in my childhood. Instead of chastising me as I deserved, he did nothing to check my idle propensities, and would enjoy any sly trick of mine which came to his knowledge. Sometimes, to be sure, if I offended him, he threatened to cut off my head; and as he was every hour of the day armed with an instrument well calculated for the purpose, I trembled for my safety upon such occasions, and kept out of his way.

"My mother was more indulgent to me than my father, and from helping her at twelve years of age in her daily avocation of cooking kabobs, I contracted an attachment to the culinary profession, in preference to the more dignified business of my father. The latter was extremely angry at my giving the frying-pan a preference to the grinding-stone, and tried every mode to obliterate my attachment for so degrading a business. He called it a

'beastly occupation to live by roasting and rolling in grease, fit only for old women.' My mother on these occasions would retaliate by abusing the mystery of the grinding-stone; and these disputes, begun in jest, frequently ended in earnest. Volleys of abuse were let loose, and whenever exhausted nature afforded a momentary pause, though this seldom happened until they had mutually come to a stand-still for lack of fresh epithets of vituperation, my father generally broke silence first, saying, 'It does not signify talking, Fuzl Khan shall grind.' 'He shall not grind,' my mother would reply; 'he shall fry.' Then the storm would rage, till the words 'grind,' 'fry'—'grind,' 'fry' —were alone distinguishable; but I found that my mother had invariably the last word. Perhaps this led me to believe that she was always right, and my father always wrong, for the last word she always would have if life depended upon it; and as often as my poor father said 'grind,' 'fry' was sure to come after—the first growled out, and the last muttered, to avoid a concord of sounds. Thus, between grinding and frying, I led a very uncomfortable life, and often meditated a trip to Surat, and a disappointment to both my father and mother. My old companions, however, dissuaded me; and for the sake of peace, I endeavoured to please both my parents—by grinding at times for the one, and frying a little for the other. Every pice I could raise I now staked at *puchees*,* *eki beki*,† and other games. This course of life, besides

* A sort of chess. † Odd and even.

taking my money, led me into serious quarrels with my companions. A youth named Buxoo Bhæ invariably won my money, and I began at length to entertain suspicions of his unfair dealings with me. One day he fleeced me of every pice I could raise, and I proposed one game more of eki beki, in the vain hope of regaining my money. He assented, and we began to play. I was soon more and more a loser, and he insisted upon my giving him a small and favourite gold ring which I always wore, as a pledge for the debt. I threw it to him, and went away in no very enviable state of mind. It so happened, that when I reached home my father ordered me to turn his grinding-lathe for an hour or two; I consented with a very ill grace. After the first hour my father was called away, and desired me during his absence to polish the sword he had just sharpened. It was a long Mahratta double-edged weapon, and consequently required double labour. In my then ill-humour, I polished away at a great rate, wishing to get through my job as soon as I could, and also to work off the remembrance of my ill-luck and the avarice of my antagonist. My father's grinding-shop was situated in an obscure alley, where few people were to be seen after sunset. This evening, unfortunately, just as I had finished one edge of the sword, I looked up and saw the greedy Buxoo, who, in a triumphant manner passing by, held up to my view the ring I had lost, and gave a smile of exultation as it caught my eye. This was more than I could bear; I rushed out of the

shop with the two-edged sword in my hand, and cut at him with it. The blow fell over his shoulder; down he dropped, and away I ran as fast as my legs would carry me, leaving the sword behind me. I took refuge in my mother's kabob-shop, dreading the result of my furious conduct. My mother was not within, but I soon saw her return laden with sheep's heads, tails, livers, and trotters. 'Hey-day, son,' said she, 'what brings you here? I thought you were at the grinding-shop?' 'O mother!' cried I, 'confound the grinding-shop, and all that belongs to it. I have brought myself into trouble. Would to Allah I had never touched a sword!' 'What now—what now?' said my mother. 'I have only killed a young man with the sword I was grinding, as he passed by the shop.' I then told her the whole tale, and of my loss at eki beki. The good woman loaded Buxoo with abuse, and did not seem to think I was much to blame. Whilst we were talking over the matter, some of the durbar police entered the cook-shop, and seized me without asking a single question. A crowd surrounded the door instantly, and thus was I led in captivity to the *chowkee* or lock-up house. My mother went weeping and wailing behind me.

"In the chowkee I passed the night, and in the morning was led before the chief magistrate of the city. Buxoo, with his arm in a sling, stood ready to bear witness to the assault made upon him; he stated the truth with a little exaggerated colouring. The *cazee** was present, and bore

* A Mohammedan official.

his part in the consultation and proceedings. The chief magistrate was inclined to propose a fine only upon me; but Cazee Shana, badeen, who never lost an opportunity of displaying his consequence, insisted on the propriety of applying the rattan, to which I was accordingly sentenced to the tune of two dozen stripes. The fine was thirty rupees, which my father and mother between them paid for me; but no entreaties could prevail on the magistrates to remit the rattan. Fortunately, I had not hurt Buxoo so much as I had expected. Probably in my hurry I turned the sword, so that the flat part, or at all events the blunted edge, only fell upon him; had I struck him with the edge which had been just set in order, I must have cut into the bone. All this was said after the manner of prosing judges from the bench, and mingled with admonitions to curb my passion for the future.

"The rattan was duly applied, and I roared with pain; in addition to which my ears were assailed between every stroke with the piercing shrieks of my mother. The two dozen being unmercifully laid on, I was suffered to go home. My mother rubbed my back over with mutton fat, oil, ghee, and other greasy substances, and then put me to bed, where the agony I endured for a long time prevented the possibility of sleep. Time, the great healer of sorrow and sore backs, at length conducted me again into the kabob-shop. My mother employed me to go to the butchers' shops to buy sheep-heads and other materials for her business, and furnished me with money for the purpose

I was one day, I remember, to bring six sheep-tails to make soup with. I met some of my old companions, who persuaded me to have a game of eki beki, and I lost very quickly all the money which I was to have laid out in sheep-tails. In great perplexity how to account to my mother for the loss of the cash, I met Hoossein Bhaee, a very particular friend. He advised me to get some dog-tails, as they were plenty enough, and to boil them up. He added I might be sure the difference would not be found out by the greatest glutton in Broach. I hesitated at first, but there was no remedy for it, and begged him to help me; he very willingly lent me his assistance. Taking some meat with us, therefore, we enticed away into an obscure place several of these unlucky quadrupeds, and sliced off the tails of six of the best fed and most plump among them. Home I went, scalded off the hair, and popped them into the pot. I had scarcely done this when my mother came into the cook-room, and chid me for my long tarrying. I assured her I had made all the haste I could, and that the tails were actually in the pot: she commended my zeal, and seemed pleased at the skill I had shown in manufacturing the soup. At the usual hour in the evening the loungers began to call for their basins of soup, which I served out to them with great solemnity. Not one discovered any difference; they paid their money and departed. Finding I succeeded so well, I determined to pocket the money in future, and substitute dog instead of sheep tails.

"In a day or two after the foregoing affair, I was again sent to the butchers' shops to buy some odd bits to roll up into kabobs, as well as more tails for soup. I again consulted with Hoossein Bhaee, who once more advised me, not however to slice off the tails of the unfortunate dogs, but to buy real sheep-tails this time, as by so many dogs losing their tails we might be discovered, and to kill a puppy two-thirds grown for the kabobs. I followed his advice strictly, spent half the money given me in sheep-tails, and returning to the cook-shop, rolled up the puppy-flesh in ghee and threw it into the pan, and then made the soup all in such good time that my poor mother, over and over again, commended my diligence. The customers dropped in as usual, and among them, my late friend the magistrate, who got me rattaned. He called for kabobs, and I was in a panic lest he should discover the trick. He devoured them, however, heartily, paid handsomely for what he ate, and went away perfectly satisfied. It was a gratifying sight to me to see the old fellow's jaws working at the dogs' kabobs, and the grease from them running down his beard upon his magisterial garment. This fun and its profits were too good to last long. One day I applied to my friend Hoossein to get me more dogs' flesh, and begged him to be very speedy. He surprised me by the rapid fulfilment of my commission. I took the flesh, rolled it up in balls, and fried it, according to custom. The Musselmen called as usual for kabobs; but, on tasting

them, spit them out again, and declared they were poisoned. Some vomited, and others called for water. In the midst of the hubbub I sneaked off to Hoossein, leaving my mother to account in the best way she could for the nauseous taste of her kabobs. Hoossein said that our friends, the true believers, were so fond of grease and oil that he thought anything rolled up in it would go down; and not having time and opportunity to kill a dog, he conceived that a few slices from one already dead, near by where he lived, would do as well. I told him he had ruined me, for if the cazee should hear that he had been fed upon dogs' kabobs, he would have no mercy upon us.

"By this time it had got rumoured through the city that our kabobs were made of dogs' flesh. I crept into a large jar, used for keeping grain, which was placed at the back of Hoossein's house, during the hubbub. Several persons, quite infuriated, had come to search for the villain who had given them dogs' flesh for that of sheep, and I plainly overheard their conversation. One said the cazee was seized with violent vomitings the instant he heard of the imposition, although he ate his share the preceding day, and enjoyed it highly. This I deemed a good joke. The police, I heard, were in search of me. Hoossein declared he knew not where I was, and appeared as anxious as the rest to discover me. Then I heard several persons complaining that their dogs had lost their tails most mysteriously, and they had no doubt how they were gone; that it was

evident the deception was systematic, and had been long continued. The worst thing I heard was that my mother had been confined; upon this I determined to deliver myself up, but would not yet leave my hiding-place, lest Hoossein should be implicated for concealing me.

"As soon as the crowd had dispersed from opposite Hoossein's door, I emerged from the friendly jar, and thanked my old acquaintance for the protection he had afforded me. I stated to him my determination to surrender myself to save my mother. He lamented my hard fate, but advised me to conceal myself a little longer in a shed opposite his house, while he went to make inquiry how matters stood. 'Possibly,' said he, 'your mother may not be confined at all, and is even now at liberty. Do not be too rash, and throw away a chance when you may yet escape.' I applauded his caution, and concealed myself in the shed. I had not been there more than an hour, when the durbar police made their appearance, and dragged me from my hiding-place. Hoossein stood outside with a face expressing great concern, though I afterwards learned that this hypocritical friend had betrayed me, for the sake of the reward offered for my apprehension. Had I known this, I should not have hesitated to implicate him as an accomplice in the act, for I then easily guessed why he recommended me to seek a shelter in the shed, instead of under his own roof. I was now hurried to the durbar,* and, to my

* Court-house.

astonishment, found my mother at liberty, and spoke to her, by which I learned that she had never been involved at all. I told her why I did not abscond,—that it was entirely on her account, and on my hearing she was imprisoned. She caressed me for my kind consideration towards her, and bade me be of good cheer, that I should not be very heavily punished. I must acknowledge that the thought of another two dozen rattans raised no very pleasant sensations in my mind. Being summoned to the court, I perceived the cazee in the plenitude of his power, talking very seriously to Scindea's soobahdar, a Brahmin of consequence and chief of the city. He appeared both disgusted and amused with the cazee's serious deportment on the occasion, and could not refrain from smiling as the recollection of how the dirty Mohammedans had been duped crossed his mind. The charge was read against me, and I confessed the crime. The soobahdar, and all his Brahmin and Hindoo associates in the durbar, enjoyed a hearty laugh at the account I gave of the transaction; whilst the cazee and the Mohammedans were mortified to the quick, and deeply repented having given publicity to the affair. At length the soobahdar said, 'Fuzl Khan, this is the second time you have been brought before this durbar. It appears you have indulged in gambling, from your own account, and for that I shall punish you. In respect to your soups and kabobs, if people will eat such beastly fare, I cannot but think they are well served. The present

case should be a lesson to them in future to be less eager to swallow all that comes in their way, and make them a little nicer in the examination of what they eat. It is still my duty to prevent your frying any more kabobs in this city; and your sentence is, that you be imprisoned one month, and then expelled from Broach; and severe shall be your punishment if you are ever caught within the city walls again." I bowed to the ground, and was conducted to prison, well pleased at my back's escaping the rattan, and happy at not being fined. My mother visited me in prison, as did my father, who failed not to hint to her that he knew what would be the end of my frying. 'Peace, peace,' said my mother, who, as usual, would have the last word, 'I knew what would be the end of grinding; for remember, but for that detestable occupation Fuzl Khan would not have been punished the first time.' My father could not reply to this home-thrust at his reasoning, and he sheltered himself in silence from the pending storm.

CHAPTER XV.

"THE term of my imprisonment having expired, I was led out of the city, accompanied by my mother, who, as her trade had been ruined, determined to quit the place, taking me with her. We followed the road to Surat; and as we trudged along, she gave me a severe lecture for my dissolute manner of life, blaming my father for every bad action of which I had been guilty. I now first learned through her the duplicity of Hoossein. She abused him in the strongest language when I told her he was the person who had sliced off the dogs' tails, and had first initiated me into the trick. 'Aye,' said she, 'that dead dog was the ruin of us; good fresh dog-flesh, for all I know, might have passed for ever.'

"My mother had provided a bullock to carry all she was worth in the world. This animal was grotesquely laden with frying-pans, kettles, pots, and baskets. A sheep's-head and trotters hung dangling at the tail of all. My mother bought the latter to save money on the road, or, as she said, 'to secure a cheap supper at Kim Chowkey,' the half-way house between Broach and Surat. Nothing worth mentioning happened on our journey, and we reached

Surat in safety. This town belonged to the English, and everything there was conducted with the utmost regularity. Walking one day in the street, a man very civilly asked me to carry a basket, which he had in his hand, to the durbar, to be given to the English judge. He gave me half a rupee for my trouble; and being thus paid beforehand, I set off briskly. On my way I felt very curious to discover what the basket, which was of an extraordinary shape, contained. I accordingly took it home, and, entering a room at the top of the house, took off the cover. How was I terror-struck at beholding the head of a man covered with blood! I trembled to think what an escape I had met with. If I had presented the basket, I should have been in all probability hanged, as no one would have credited my receiving it in the street. To keep it a moment in our own house was dangerous, and I consulted my mother as to what had best be done with it. She replied, 'Anything but to make kabobs of it, you young rascal!' I assured her I had no such inclination; that my last experiment in that line was amply sufficient for me. She then advised me to roll the head down the staircase of the next house, which was terraced as well as our own; and then the owners of that house, who might be more ingenious than we were, would perhaps be able to give a better account of it. These people were Jews, and lived by usury; they were consequently disliked by most of the inhabitants around. My mother's advice, whether given in jest or earnest, seemed to

me the best which I could follow under the present circumstances; and therefore, at night, when I was pretty certain there were none of the tenants in the upper apartments, I climbed over a low party-wall, and very deliberately rolled the head down the staircase, having carefully repacked it in the basket. This being done, I went out for a ramble, leaving my mother at home. All was quiet in the Jew's house when I went out; but on my return I found a crowd around the door, and the foujdar, or native master of police, with all his train, was approaching in the full plenitude of his self-sufficient authority. The poor Jew was naturally in great terror and alarm. His family were in tears; and in spite of their protestations and supplications, he was arrested and borne away. The head, too, was taken to its original place of destination,—to the judge of the durbar. Inquiries were now set on foot everywhere, and rewards offered to any who would throw light on the mystery that hung around the affair, for it was acknowledged that mystery enveloped it. The Jew was very naturally believed innocent. It was not probable, if he had committed a murder, he would suffer so easy a discovery of it to be made; and then, where was the body?

"It happened that, on casting my eyes over the crowd, I saw in the midst of it the very individual who had first put the head into my hands. He was an Abyssinian by birth, and of gigantic stature. I was so curious to know the history of the head, that I determined to inquire the

particulars from the man himself. If he refused, I had made up my mind to bear testimony against him; and for this purpose I forced my way through the crowd, and, placing myself beside him, whispered him to accompany me to a more secluded spot. It was by this time quite dark. He followed me, and I opened to him the purport of my business with him, threatening an immediate disclosure if he withheld from me a single circumstance connected with the murder. He soon settled my curiosity by drawing a dagger from his waist, and plunging it into my side, saying, 'Take that as the reward of your curiosity!' I fell, and he ran off, no doubt believing that he had sealed my lips in eternal silence. I should have perished but for the night patrol, which was attracted to the spot by my groans and lamentations. They carried me to a house close by, where I fainted from loss of blood, and became utterly insensible. How long I lay in this situation I cannot tell; when reason returned I found an English doctor by my side, together with my mother. My wound was bandaged, and every care had been taken of me. As soon as I was recovered sufficiently, I was carried home, and then ordered to give up the name or describe the author of my sufferings. The first I could not do, from my utter ignorance of it; but the second I described so well, that I soon learned he had been apprehended and imprisoned. The Abyssinian was now brought to trial, and great stir was made in consequence of the public curiosity being excited

respecting him. The fellow possessed a great deal of cunning, and guessing that I should relate the whole truth, took care, previous to his trial, to be beforehand with me. He stated that he met me one evening, and that I desired him to carry a basket containing the head of a dead man to the police-office, but that he shrunk back in abhorrence from the employment. Upon this I wanted him to promise not to divulge the circumstance, and that I would find out another mode of getting it conveyed there. My house adjoining the Jew's, where the head was discovered, naturally made his hearers give his story more credit than it deserved. He had still, however, to account for stabbing me; and this he contrived to do by informing the magistrate, with the utmost composure, that he had threatened to accuse me on the night the head was discovered, and that I first attempted his life; upon which, in his own defence, he had drawn and used his dagger. My depositions on the contrary were deemed artful and ingenious fictions; so I was transferred to the gaol myself, and the Abyssinian made the witness against me. After a long imprisonment my trial came on before a different judge from him who had committed me; when, after a tedious process, I was acquitted of murder. The Abyssinian was also set at liberty, the proof of the crime of which I was accused being utterly inefficient. The witness against me was suspected, after all, to be guilty; but the trial, though postponed in the hope of further evidence being obtained, was con-

cluded without unravelling the mystery of the head. No one recognised it, nor was any trunk ever discovered. I could not myself account for it, why the Habeshy should wish it sent to the judge of the court.

"It was but justice towards me that I should now be released, but you see how unfortunate I have always been. I was in the present instance saddled with strong presumptive proof of murder; then I was stabbed, and confined a long time in durance, and finally brought to a public trial. In fact, I suffered more in the present instance, in a case in which I was innocent, than at Broach, where I pleaded guilty to every charge on which I was arraigned. My mother, as usual, was overjoyed at my escape, and conjured me to think seriously of some employment, she declaring that her roasting and frying could not maintain two of us. I tried hard to get made a police peon, but I had neither money nor interest to back me. At length I became a sort of under-groom to a rich Banian, cleaning his horse and running errands for him wherever I was commanded to go. My chief employment, however, was to carry about a large bundle of goods, consisting of clothes and linen. In this I was accompanied by one of my master's under-shopmen, named Sewchund, a Marwarry. My master's name was Lalchund Doorgadas, a man of wealth and consequence. Lalchund was a perpetual suitor in courts. If he had no just claims, he invented them to suit his own purposes; and, nine times out of ten, succeeded by means of false evidence

and fabricated documents. I was frequently called upon to bear witness to facts that never came within my knowledge, and required to sign my name as a witness to deeds, the contents of which were never explained to me. It was fortunate they expected nothing more of me, as to scrawl my own name was the utmost stretch of my acquirements; and this I learned at Broach. I succeeded so well in my new calling, and got so familiar with the iniquitous business, that I no more hesitated in taking a false oath, than in swallowing one of my mother's kabobs. Lalchund invariably rewarded me when he gained a cause. I was frequently admitted to the midnight manufacturing of deeds and mortgage-bonds. The greatest nicety was to make the paper bear the appearance of age; to do which, some of my master's council advised him to rub the paper on a bullock's back, which would deprive it of its gloss, and give it a dirty hue at the same time. This was recommended also to me by one of the court-vakeels or pleaders, who encourage as many suits as possible for the sake of their individual profits, each being allowed certain fees for every suit brought in. These men, being intimately acquainted with all government regulations, are the very best persons to be employed out of court in the manufacturing of causes, and in court to plead in their support. I have been kept up a whole night by them, learning my lesson for the next day.

"I must now proceed to a case of great importance to me and my employers, which ended in no very honourable

way. In a cause of great consequence, in which my master's interest was very deeply concerned, I had been drilled for three successive nights. Lalchund and several of his partners were present the whole time. These wise-acres did the thing too well, and they over-drilled me. On the day of trial I became so confused, from the quantity I had to remember, that I forgot half my cue, and upon a sharp cross-examination, contradicted myself so often, that they threatened to send me to gaol for perjury. I shall never forget Lalchund's long visage on this occasion. He might well look confounded, as he lost his suit, his money, and his character at the same time,—all this, too, through my over-zeal in his service; for I forgot to mention before that I told many more lies than were required, in addition to and by way of mending matters. Prudence had wholly forsaken me. I was committed for my perjury, and Lalchund was under horrible fears lest I should let out, on my trial, the whole of the frauds in which he had employed me, and so ruin him. The truth is, I was pondering whether I could not by this means save myself from punishment, and whether it would not be best to relate all my nocturnal drillings; not that, if convicted of perjury, I should escape, unless I showed I had important revelations to unfold, which might be a matter of convention; but then Lalchund would be undone, and I did not wish this. While meditating on the best policy for my own interest, and how I might in the safest way get clear, or lighten the

cloud hanging over me, my mother entered the cell where I was confined. 'In prison again!' said she; 'what a hopeful son I have! How long will this continue? You will be hanged in the end, to a certainty!' 'Well, mother,' I replied, 'the knowledge of this is some consolation, for then I shall find an end of my troubles.' 'Now, then, my boy, listen to me,' said she; 'I know all your present difficulties, and think we may yet turn them to some advantage, although you must prepare to get severely punished.' My reply was, 'Well, mother, there is nothing very new to me in punishment; show me what advantage will accrue from it, and here is my back ready for the cane, if it be worth purchasing at such a price.' 'Why, you know you are to be tried for perjury, boy.' 'I know that too well, mother,' said I. 'Well, and what do you mean to say in your defence?' she observed. 'Why,' I rejoined, 'I mean to criminate Lalchund.' 'Then you are a fool,' she returned, 'if you think that will save you. Are you not equally culpable?' To this I answered, 'Yes, I allowed that; but whether I accused him or not, the judge must know that he bribed me, or, at least, that I had been bribed by some one; and who would he fix upon as soon as Lalchund?' My mother agreed to the justice of this; 'But then,' said she, 'the system of drilling, the disclosure of their midnight meetings, and the conduct of the vakeel or government-pleaders, need not come out. Would you bring ruin on them all?' 'What ruin have they not

brought upon me?' I answered. 'The more fool you,' said my mother; 'you know I always told you that eki beki would be your destruction. Listen, however, I have received an offer of five hundred rupees from Lalchund, and five hundred more from the pleader, if you will hold your tongue.' 'What! one thousand rupees! Why, my dear mother, you may cut my tongue out for that sum. I will be mute, never fear—silent as a dead dog.' 'Pish! no more of dead dogs, if you have one particle of love left for me; recollect what I have suffered by them. But, son, this is a serious affair—one thousand rupees, recollect!' 'Ay, ay, mother; you may fry away long enough before you will make that sum: lying is, after all, a more profitable thing than cooking kabobs.' 'Silence,' said my mother, 'is more profitable than either, just at present.' 'Then,' said I, 'my dear mother, get the money. Make them believe I am determined to blab all, and they will come down with the cash at once, depend upon it. Let me know when you have it, and then set off with it to Broach as fast as you can; for if you remain here when they have got all they want, and the trial is over, rely upon this, that they will never rest until they get the money back from you again.' 'Impossible, child! impossible! they cannot do such a thing; there is no law to help them.' 'My good mother,' said I, 'you do not know them; they can frame a bond as quickly as you can roast a kabob; and as to evidence, there is a regular set here who live by the trade of swearing.'

"Our dialogue continued some time longer in much the same strain. It concluded by her inquiring what would become of me? and telling me that I should be terribly punished, and by my observing that they could hardly flay me alive; that one thousand rupees was an ointment of great virtue for sore backs, far better than her mutton-fat; and that if I was imprisoned in addition, as she said I should be, she would always know where to find me; and also, that I should be certain to get into no new scrapes for a time at least. On taking leave, she wished God might protect me; and I begged her to hold out, and try and get a hundred or two of rupees above the thousand. She left me, promising to do so, and to see me the following day. Never, thought I to myself, was man so well paid before for holding his tongue. The payment I shall get will be in a different shape, but it will be dealt to me whether I remain dumb or not. One thousand rupees! charming!—two dozen rattans! terrible! thought I; and, stretching myself on my mat, I fell asleep.

"My mother visited me the next evening, and reported the improbability of gaining more than one thousand rupees, and not even that sum, without considerable demur. They even talked to her about drafts and bills of exchange for the amount. Thus it appeared as if they designed to evade the payment. I declared I would blab out the entire of their nefarious proceedings, unless the cash was paid down in good coin. My mother was as anxious as myself for this

mode of doing the business, and departed once more to demand prompt payment. On the following day she came to me again, but brought no good account of the rupees, and what was as bad, told me that the gaoler refused to admit her any more after the present day, and that, therefore, if she got the money on the next, she should send me a letter. She had forgotten that I could not read, and so was cut off from any advantage I might derive from her correspondence. She then told me she could contrive to scrawl some symbol of success on paper, and affix her mark to it, which I thought was a scrawl to resemble a skewer, but she told me it was a spoon. 'Well,' said I, 'mother, I thought it was something in your trade; explain exactly, that all may be clear.' 'Well, boy, it shall be a large bag, tied at the neck,' said she; 'by which you will understand that the money is secure in my hands. Your trial will come on the day after to-morrow, and if you do not receive this sign from me, you may be very certain the cash is not in my hands as it should be; you must then do the best for yourself.' 'I'll ruin them all if you are not paid,' said I; 'and so, my good mother, adieu!' 'In that case, as you please, my dear son. Farewell!' 'Farewell, mother!' I replied; 'if you get the money, hasten to Broach with it—not half a moment's delay!' 'Trust me for that,' she replied, and departed. Never were son and mother more sympathetic in disposition, more congenially connected!

"Another long night passed over my head. Morning came, and a letter was delivered to me by the gaoler. Full of hope I tore it open, and, to my indescribable joy, discovered the picture of a bag tied at the neck, and a mark at the bottom, which my mother no doubt intended should resemble a spoon, but it looked more like a staff with a round head, so dreadfully ill-managed were the proportions. I destroyed the paper, and waited most patiently my fate. On the following day the court was opened, and I was led up to take my trial. The judge being anxious to discover the midnight-manufactures of the bonds, offered to pardon me if I would put the court in possession of all the particulars of the transactions truly and faithfully; seeing, with the keen-sightedness of a man of his profession, that I was merely a tool of men whom he already suspected of crimes, but respecting whom he possessed no proof by which to obtain their conviction. He informed me, with a sternness not to be witnessed by one in my circumstances without tremor, that if I kept back or varied one minute point from the truth, I should not escape severe punishment even then. I now began to reflect on the effects of the rattan and a long imprisonment; and as I had, I thought, pocketed the cash, I was not inclined to set at nought a sore back, as I had done previously, when the money was only viewed by anticipation. I begged an hour, therefore, to consider, and was allowed to retire into a small room by myself. On my way to the entrance of it, among

a crowd of persons I recognised the pleader and a clerk of Lalchund's. They gave me a significant look, and placed their fingers to their lips to remind me of my promise of secrecy. I drew my hand across my throat, as much as to say they might cut my throat if I criminated them. This produced a nod of satisfaction from those scoundrels, who separated or mingled among the crowd with revived hopes of their security. Left in a small chamber by myself, I turned over and over again the offer of the judge to pardon me. The more I thought upon the subject, the more eager did I feel to avoid the rattan, and the less consideration did I feel for Lalchund and his associates. I apprehended no violence from them, in return, towards my mother, as I felt certain she had decamped to Broach; and I could have nothing to apprehend, as the associates would all be seized the moment I mentioned their names, and I should have nothing to do but to set off to my mother; for, though I dared not be seen in Broach, I could enter her house by stealth, and keep close, and get away again in the same secret manner. Then I urged to myself that I had promised to be silent if they paid me, and that I was about to break my word. But the rattan! the rattan! This fearful instrument of punishment drove from my mind all ideas of honour, and I had determined to avoid, if possible, its direful smart. At length the hour allowed me for consideration expired, and I was once more placed before the judge, to whom I related every particular, and implicated by name Lalchund,

Hurry Bahae the pleader, Sewchund the Marwarry, and many others whose names I need not relate. No sooner were the syllables out of my lips, than orders were given to apprehend the whole gang, and I was released, being obliged to find security to appear against them. An enemy of Lalchund did me the kindness to be my recognisance on this occasion, and I found myself once more at large.

"At the very door of the court, as I was passing out, who should I see, to my great surprise, but my mother, who I expected was long before at Broach, and settled in her old kabob-shop again. 'Why, you look astonished at seeing me,' said she, the moment she saw me. 'Indeed I am,' I replied. 'Why are you not gone to Broach?' 'Why should I?' she rejoined. I then made a sign to be silent, and whispered her that this was no place to talk over our secrets, and that we had better proceed to her house; for it was difficult to make my poor mother keep quiet or talk low in public; and, in spite of all I could do in the present instance, she continued to mumble in a low tone as she walked beside me. 'I am glad you impeached the rogues—the villains! it serves them right.' I longed to ask her what she meant, but dared not do so in the public street. We arrived at her lodgings, and having locked the door of her room, she again began. 'Serve them right, the villains! the scoundrels! the rogues! serve them right, I say. How glad I am you gave them up! Were you not sadly disappointed in not getting a letter from me?' 'Not getting a

letter, my good mother!' said I; 'why, I did get a letter, marked with your bag and spoon!' 'O the crafty villains!' observed she; 'it serves them right—they are done for!' 'Explain yourself, my dear mother; pray explain!' I answered. 'Did you not send me a letter? Were not the bag and spoon drawn on it? Have you not received the money?' 'O the crafty dogs!' she answered; 'you have served them right! they are ruined, as they deserved!' 'My dear mother,' said I, pettishly, 'tell me whether you did or did not get the money and send the letter?' 'Neither, boy,' she replied. 'Money—letter, indeed, not I; but I see through it all now. Sewchund, the clerk of Lalchund, called upon me to talk over the matter, promising to bring me the money almost immediately; but, understanding I had been refused admission to the gaol, asked by what means I contrived to convey intelligence of the money having been paid to you. I told him all that was arranged; that I had agreed to send you a letter, signed with the mark of the spoon. He then said the money should be forthcoming very shortly, and he should soon see me again. Now, instead of bringing me the money, they forged a letter to you, with the mark of which I told them. Serve them right!' repeated my mother; 'the rogues! the wretches! the villains!' I then observed, 'My dear mother, your conjecture is very just; they nearly succeeded; for I thought the money was safe in your hands.' 'Then how came you to implicate them?' said my mother. 'Alas! my dear mother; had you ever felt the rattan, you

would not have asked that question; had you known what its smart is, you would have acted as I did; for, making sure of the money, I felt anxious enough to avoid the cane upon any terms.' 'O the villains!' cried my mother; 'it serves them right! Trying to deceive, they have been deceived; it is a proper punishment for them, the knaves! I should have been brokenhearted had you borne the punishment, and not gained by it a single rupee to help us out of our difficulties and cure your wounds.' 'I was very nearly so situated,' I remarked, in reply. 'You see, mother, the necessity of writing; had you been able to sign your name, no forgery could have taken place.' 'Why, dolt,' said my mother, angrily, who felt her hieroglyphics arraigned by the observation; 'could you have read it if I had been able to do so? You may see the necessity of learning to read from the same cause.' 'Ay, true, indeed,' I answered; 'we are neither of us scholars, and the more the pity!' 'Scholars enough to outwit men who are no conjurors!' she answered. Thank Allah and you, my lad, we shall see the greedy villains well punished! Serve them right, the rogues! the scoundrels! the scapegraces!' A hearty laugh now burst simultaneously from us both, when we reflected on the way in which the biters had been bit. On the strength of our good fortune, my mother went out and bought a sheep's head and some odd bits, which were twisted into kabobs without loss of time, and we enjoyed a hearty supper.

"After our supper was over, I retired to my mat in high

spirits at having escaped the dreadful rattan, and soon fell into a soft slumber. From this I was speedily awoke by hearing a noise in my room. Looking up, I saw two men with canes and a lanthorn standing by me. 'Alas!' thought I, 'it is not decreed that I shall escape the cane, after all, —caned I must be! Who are you?' I demanded. 'That we will speedily answer,' said one of them; and I discovered him to be the Jew who lived next door to us. 'We will teach you,' he cried, in bad Hindostanee, 'to throw heads into my house, you Musselman dog! We will give you a lesson for this trick, which you shall well remember!' So, dragging me over the floor, they began to lay on me in a most furious way. I heard my mother screaming outside the door, which the Jews had taken the precaution to fasten. She could not, therefore, afford me any kind of protection. The infuriated son of Israel applied the cane as long as he could stand over me, and then departed, my mother giving him and his companion a volley of abuse, to which no reply was made, other than by pushing her down-stairs, they effecting their escape over the terrace into their own house. The caning I received at Broach was a flea-bite compared to the present. I bled very profusely, and mutton-fat was this time found to be of no avail in healing my wounds. I was not at all prepared for such a punishment; for in my more recent troubles I had forgotten all about the head, the Jew, and the Abyssinian. My mother, fortunately, received no injury, although she rolled from the top to the bottom of

the stairs. She was, therefore, able to administer to my wants, and assist me, as far as she could, in healing my wounds. It was, indeed, a lesson I shall never forget, as the Jew said it should be; and full severe enough to prevent my ever rolling bloody heads down my neighbours' staircases again.

"The following morning my mother, without my knowledge, repaired to a magistrate to lodge a complaint against my punisher. Persons were sent off in every direction to apprehend them without avail; they had packed up their goods and departed. When I recovered, I could never leave the house a moment without being watched by the emissary of the man who had stood security for my appearance as a witness against Lalchund; and this I found at last so unpleasant, that I confined myself entirely within doors. After three months had elapsed, I took my station in court, and had the pleasure of seeing Lalchund put to the bar. He and his associates all pleaded not guilty; but my testimony soon proved to the contrary, and Lalchund was sentenced to pay a fine of two thousand rupees, and to be imprisoned for a year. Sewchund, the office-man, was to be paraded through the city on an ass, with his face to the tail, and to be publicly flogged; the pleader was fined five hundred rupees, and dismissed from his office; and the clerk was to accompany Sewchund in his ride through the city, and receive one dozen rattans. Thus was the gang disposed of; and being myself at perfect liberty, I returned

home to my mother's house. When she heard the sentence she took her station at an upper window, and determined to see the culprits ride in disgrace through the streets, saying, 'Serve them right! serve them right, the villains! the rogues! the wretches! the forgers of my marks!' I was with her when we heard the trumpet and drum, which in mock ceremony led the procession. First came the Marwarry, the office-man or shopman, with his face to the tail of a lame ass, looking miserable indeed. The clerk followed him, and was so ashamed that he covered himself over with a cloth. My mother, observing this, called from the window, 'Take off the cloth! take off the cloth! serve them right, the forgers!' It was with difficulty I could restrain her. Most fortunately no one heard her, or if they did, paid her no attention. She waited at the window to see them return, and then went to behold them flogged. She told me the crowd was so great she could not get near enough to see anything; but she heard the cry of the knaves, and it was music to her soul—concluding as usual with, 'Serve them right, the villains!'

"I now began to consider whether it would not be hazardous for me to remain in the city, where I must have many enemies. I therefore told my mother I should enlist as one of the Company's sepoys. She made no objection, but lamented the separation which must inevitably ensue between us. I cheered her with the hope of one day meeting again, and that I would not fail to let her know from

time to time how I succeeded. Everything being previously arranged, I enlisted in a battalion then at Surat. Now I had to undergo discipline of another description. My instructor enforced his lessons with such frequent applications of the rattan, that I began to think I was born for no other purpose than to be caned. I had scarcely learned my duty, when we were ordered to march for the Deccan. I took leave of my mother, promising to send her a letter whenever I could get some one to write for me; she made the same promise to me, and we separated. We arrived at Seroor fatigued to death, and the duty soon became so severe, that I deserted with one of my comrades, and hearing of this horde of Pindarees I volunteered among them. I have been here two years. Just before I deserted from the English, I heard from my father, by a letter, the melancholy news of my poor mother's death at Surat. I have now concluded my story, and leave it to you, my friends, to say whether you do not think with myself that I have been more hardly used and worse treated than my friend, whose tale you have already heard. What my other comrade may be able to relate (alluding to the third Pindaree), I know not, though I remain to be convinced that his misfortunes are equal to mine."

We all laughed at his "misfortunes" as he called them, instead of commiserating him, when we recollected their nature, though we verbally stated that he had been hardly used. One of us asking him if he ever heard anything more

about the bloody head, he replied that he was not over-anxious to appear busy in his inquiries respecting a thing which had involved him in so much trouble; he said, "I heard that the Abyssinian was an agent of the Nawaub's, who had employed him to despatch some fellow that had contrived to get access to his seraglio. Instead of rewarding the man, the Nawaub dismissed him. This induced the assassin to seek himself by trying to fix the murder on the Nawaub, without implicating himself. Whether this was the real fact or not, I have never had the power of deciding." Here the second Pindaree concluded his story.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE tale of the second Pindaree entertained us much, and not the less from the fellow's belief that, because he was unsuccessful in the nefarious transactions in which he had been engaged, he was entitled to pity. His ill success at eki beki he seemed to think a ground for receiving the compassionate consideration of others, and demanded pity almost in proportion to the knavery he had exhibited. This was like a true son of Mahomet, who always aspires to honour and riches, be he ever so great a vagabond, or sprung even from the lowest of the low. We humoured the foolish rogue, however, by affecting to condole with him, and by telling him how much he was to be pitied, and how hard it seemed that one with talents such as his, superior to those possessed by persons of his years in general, and with such kind dispositions and amiable propensities, should be unsuccessful at eki beki, lose his rupees as often as he did, and suffer so much from the rattan. He thought we condoled with him in good earnest, and impressively lifting up his eyes and hands, exclaimed, "It is the will of Allah!" to our great entertainment.

The third Pindaree now offered to relate his history, and with a melancholy countenance began thus:—"I was born in Kattywar. My father was a merchant of great respectability. His word was considered as good as his bond, and his neighbours all looked upon him as one of the most honest and upright merchants in India. His name was Lalldas, and mine is Gopaldass Lalldas. At fifteen years of age I was placed in my father's shop, and at seventeen was made a partner in his trade. We dealt in grain, and my father had the repute of being a very rich man. I know myself that he advanced loans to the Rajah of Kattywar. Notwithstanding all this, I could never finger a single rupee; but I was well provided with everything else I could wish at home. My father carefully checked every disposition to extravagance on my part, and set me such an example himself, that I soon saw the advantage of keeping a close fist. My father, however, might have spared his lessons on economy, if he had reflected that he took care I should not have an opportunity of being wasteful or extravagant, by never allowing me to call a rupee my own. We were also sahoukars * and granted bills of exchange upon Bombay and Madras, and we advanced money on interest. This business kept my fingers in contact with piles of money; but I made a secret vow never to do a dishonest act, and I adhered to it. Perhaps one reason why I more easily adhered to my resolution was the certainty of discovery

* Bankers.

taking place, in case I was guilty of dishonesty. My father was continually counting his rupees, and adding them up, calculating interest, and comparing the balances in his different books, and he would have very soon discovered the smallest deficiency in the money that he kept by him for business.

"I was betrothed at eight years old to a girl named Gopee. Upon my arriving at seventeen years, neither I nor my father contemplated the engagement with much pleasure. Gopee's father had been a Sirdar of some consequence, and in possession of a considerable degree of power; he was now reduced to a mere nobody, bore a bad character, and his wife was reputed to be a witch. An alliance with such a family was by no means desirable; for, independently of the character of my intended wife's parents, some one had put it into my father's head that the old woman would cause her daughter to bewitch me, and that together we should conjure all his money out of his strong box. This was full enough to determine my father to break off the match if he could, and to issue his commands to me for that purpose. Such a step as this was a very singular one, not only in Kattywar, but in every other place in the neighbourhood; for, after the betrothing, who ever believes it possible to get off from marriage? A Brahmin was consulted upon the subject, and he told us that a release from our contract could not be obtained in any way. Thus I was obliged at length to marry Gopee, the witch's daughter.

My father, however, would not suffer my bride to enter his house, or set her eye upon his strong box, although he had emptied it, and taken the precaution to keep his money buried in some secret place, together with his bonds and papers. I hired a house for my wife, who often visited her mother, and spent a great deal of time with her. Both wife and mother used to attack me early and late for money, constantly asking for rupees. When they found I had none in my possession, they proposed I should rob by father, and at last even desired me to murder him. I was horror-struck, as may well be imagined, at the atrocious character of these two hell-cats with whom I was so unfortunately connected, and I rushed out of their presence upon their making me the horrible proposal.

"Thus time passed away, and found me miserable enough. One day, upon entering my father's office, I found the family in great fright and grief, my father being stretched upon his bed unable to move. The servants were struck dumb with fear, and looked like statues. Upon inquiry I found, after great difficulty in questioning and cross-questioning, that a lime with two needles stuck into it, and laid on two copper pice, had been placed the night before on my father's threshold; that he as usual first opened the door, and first beheld the dreadful omen. I was too well aware of the bent of my father's mind to doubt the effect upon him, or that the act was intended to produce mischief, whoever the party might be that did it. I guessed at once who had

done it, and fixed the act immediately on the shoulders of my wife's mother, who was enraged at not being the better for the riches which my father was known to possess, and of which she thought she might easily get a portion through her daughter's marriage with me. My father recovered from his fright, but never regained his former state of health. From that time he seemed to fail rapidly. I am not sure, however, whether my marriage was not the main cause of his decline, which the circumstance now related tended to increase. At last he became incapable of transacting his affairs, lingered on a little time, and died without informing me where he had concealed his money and valuables. My mother-in-law was thus not a whit the better as to rupees for my father's decease. I begged her one day to tell me (I spoke ironically, as she was reported to be able to pry into all things) the spot where my father's money was deposited. She replied, "She would find it;" and she did so, took it all away, and decamped with it, leaving her daughter to console me in place of my father's property. My consequence and credit now ended very soon. I could not honour bills, or pay the debts incurred since my father's death; and I had gone on as usual, hoping by the discovery of the property to settle everything. A prison was the next step; but my creditors, finding it was inability to pay that kept me from doing justice, soon released me.

"I now found myself reduced to a state of absolute want. I had difficulty even to preserve myself at times from down-

right starvation. My old acquaintances avoided me; some affected to pity me, none offered to do more; and I soon knew that no earthly condition is so miserable as his who has nothing but the sympathy or charity of his fellows to rely upon for existence. To add to my misery, my wife came back to me, having had a quarrel with her mother. How to exist myself was a consideration involved in great difficulty; but at such a moment to have to provide for a wife, and a wife like mine, was a burthen almost too overwhelming for me to sustain. It appeared that my mother-in-law had refused to give a single rupee to her worthy daughter, and the latter, on this account, according to her own representation, came again to me. I explained to her that, owing to her mother's machinations, I was a ruined and destitute man, and that therefore she had better try and get some employment, which was the step I intended to adopt myself. 'What!' said she, 'you would have me beat rice, I suppose?' 'Yes,' I replied, coolly; 'or beat out your own brains, whichever you prefer doing.' This enraged her terribly. She assailed me with volleys of abuse, and called me pitiful, sordid, and cowardly, that I thus submitted to be robbed and pilfered by an old woman. When a pause in her abuse came, I ventured to ask what she would have me to do. 'Do! you whining, whimpering wretch!' she exclaimed; 'why, do anything, rather than sit down and starve quietly here. Oh, if I were a man, I would raise heaven and earth before I would submit so quietly!' I saw that she

was endeavouring to stir me up to the commission of some violent act, and to urge me to vengeance on the wicked plunderer of my money. It even seemed as if nothing but a proposition for me to kill her mother would appease the violence of her anger. I hereupon asked if there was any possibility or probability of our getting part of the money from her mother. 'The witch,' she answered, 'is only successful against fools; but still, if you are not quite unmanned by poverty, if you have a grain of spirit left, we may recover some part of it.' I inquired what she had done with the papers. 'I know nothing about the papers, and very little about the money,' my wife replied; 'most probably they are together.' I then inquired how her mother had found the treasure, and she said, 'By the same means which you yourself might have made available had you been possessed of wit, courage, or perseverance. She watched your father (who was foolish enough to empty his box and bury his cash) to the spot where he used to visit it. There lay the glittering treasure; and, mistress of this secret, she frightened your superstitious father to death with the lime and needles. Now, will you consent to make an effort to recover your property?' I replied that I would; but before I proceeded I would know whether I was required to stain my hands with blood to succeed, because, rather than commit murder, I would relinquish everything. 'You will defend yourself if you are attacked, I suppose,' she observed, 'and you will also stretch forth an arm in my defence?' I answered, 'I would.

'Yes,' said she, 'because I shall be useful to you in finding your money, otherwise you would much rather aid in taking than defending my life.' I assured her of the contrary, that I bore her no enmity, that I pitied her for the way in which she had been educated, and that I should be highly delighted to find in her a companion and a friend. She then observed, that she could be both, and asked me if I knew where her mother lived. On replying in the negative, she said, 'My mother lives at Bhooj, in Cutch. My father is also there. To gain access to them is impossible, without incurring the most imminent danger. They dwell in the ruins of the palace which was lately destroyed by the earthquake, and there also is the money.' I inquired if she was certain of this, and whether we should be able to get it. She said 'she was not so sure of that;' and I then asked if any one besides her father and mother lived among the ruins. She informed me there were a hundred freebooters there, of whom her father was commander, and they were always ready to protect his treasure. 'Surely,' I observed, 'the Government does not sanction this. Why does it not put them down?' She answered 'she did not know; there they were, and against them we should have to contend.' I told her, in that case, our scheme was perfectly hopeless; two against a hundred were fearful odds to contend with. 'Courage,' my wife replied; 'artifice and perseverance will work through stone walls. Keep a firm resolution, and follow me.'

"My wife led me into the open fields, and through ravines, until we came to a small hut, which she entered, and desired me to put on the habit of a gossein, while she arrayed herself in the dress of a boy, with a guitar in his hand. She said she preferred the dress of a gossein, because her mother was strongly bigoted in favour of these religious mendicants, and would not dare to turn away one from the door of her habitation; and that having thus obtained a footing, we might indulge in the hope of succeeding at last. I ought to have seen through the shallowness of the artifice if I had reflected but a moment, and that the knowledge of our persons rendered such a plan out of the question, as to success, were it even undertaken in good faith. The idea of recovering my property closed my eyes to all other objects. I left my crafty wife to manage all, and proceeded in silence to Bhooj, which we reached after two days' journeying on foot.

"The ruins of the palace at Bhooj presented a most awful appearance; shattered, riven, tottering, the vast fragments were a chaos of appalling objects. The heart thrilled on approaching the confusion of ruin on every side; nor could I bring myself to believe there were any human beings who would dare to inhabit such a terror-striking solitude. My wife halted without the ruined place until evening. About an hour after sunset I followed her into the thickest part of the fallen buildings. She stopped at a small iron door, and began to tune her guitar. In a few

minutes the door slowly opened, and a man in a hoarse voice demanded our business. I began bellowing out something in the true gossein style, and the man begged my blessing, which I granted, and then demanded admittance. This he dared not permit until he had consulted his superiors within. He went away, and in a short time returned and beckoned us to follow him. We obeyed, and were led through archways and narrow passages, until we found ourselves in a spacious apartment, at the upper end of which sat my mother-in-law. I approached her with trembling steps. She was a singular-looking being. She immediately began by a string of interrogations, demanding whence I came, and whither I was journeying. To these, and a number of similar questions, I gave suitable replies. She then began to question me respecting some points in my faith, and inquired the nature of the penances I had undergone; if I had subjected myself lately to any mortification, such as half-hanging, or half-roasting myself. I answered I had not, and she then said she supposed I had contented myself with a slight flagellation only. I replied that there was no necessity for my so suffering, as I had been very strict over myself. 'Well then, holy man!' the hag screamed out, 'a touch of the rattan at present would be grateful no doubt. What, ho, there! who is in waiting?' Upon this two stout fellows came into the room provided with rattans, and notwithstanding all my prayers and entreaties began to strip me. I looked round for my wife, as

much as to say, 'What shall I do now? what is the meaning of all this?' when she burst out into a loud laugh, in which she was joined by her mother. I now perceived how I had been duped and inveigled by the daughter into the mother's clutches, and that my wife had been sent after me for the purpose. The two fellows, in the meantime, proceeded to obey their orders, and beat me most cruelly, while between every stroke I heard the loud laugh of my wife and her demon of a mother. When I had received about forty strokes, I was ordered to follow the two men, who took me down a narrow staircase, at the end of which was a strong door studded with spikes. This being opened, they thrust me within it, locked it fast, and left me in utter darkness."

. . . . . .

We were suddenly interrupted at this moment by the sound of a horn, and the third Pindaree broke off abruptly. The report of a matchlock succeeded, and all around seemed to be on the alert in a moment. A loud knocking at the door of the chamber in which we were was now heard, and on opening it a messenger from the chief of the troop entered, and told us that the English were within two miles, and we must instantly decamp. "To horse! to horse!" was heard in exclamations from all quarters, and in less than an hour we were mounted and clear of the fortress.

CHAPTER XVII.

It happened, most unfortunately, that upon leaving our place of refuge in the old fortress, in our too great haste to avoid the enemy, we rushed into his very jaws. A warm, indeed a heavy fire was poured in amongst us from a small but well-placed body of infantry, upon which we could not make an impression. Our men and horses dropped fast. The friendly party which had with me occupied the story-telling-chamber agreed to keep together in the skirmish, and we all fought desperately. Early in the action, a ball struck Gopal das Lalldas, the third Pindaree, who had not been able to conclude his story; and, falling from his horse, he was run through the body by one of the enemy's Havildars. Even at such an occupied moment, the poor fellow's unfinished story flashed on my memory like a momentary light, as he fell and ended his misfortunes for ever. Soon everything decided itself against us, and we had no time to indulge a thought but for our own safety. To protract the contest was useless, and to turn our backs to the foe seemed the best policy. We followed it, and soon left the English infantry far behind us. Nanna and

Suntoo, my companions, who had been servants of Trimbuckje, proposed to take this opportunity of deserting. Nanna knew the country well; and, crying to us to follow him, he rode off, Suntoo and I keeping close at his heels. We galloped hard until we reached a village, through which it was necessary to pass. Nanna proposed dashing through at full speed (for our appearance and dress gave us the character of Pindarees, though we were not), since we knew explanation with the villagers would be useless. The latter were so oppressed by the roving Pindarees, that we should inevitably be the victims of their revenge. We used our spurs, jaded as our horses were, and dashed on at full gallop. It being early in the morning, the guard alone was up at the chowkee, or guard-house, situated in the principal street. As we passed it a dozen matchlocks were fired at us, and Suntoo fell dead. Nanna and I escaped unhurt; and attaining again the open country, congratulated each other on our lucky escape, lamenting the death of Suntoo. "It was his destiny, though," said Nanna at last, very coolly; "Suntoo could not outride that."

In our flight our horses bore up surprisingly. They had, I have no doubt, been fed with opium, a method adopted by the Pindarees when they expect them to encounter any extraordinary fatigue, or they find it needful to force them through long journeys. Some of their horses, so treated, will travel eighty coss in a day, and enable their masters to elude pursuit most effectually. We arrived with our jaded

animals on the borders of Kandeish, and then determined to proceed on foot. We turned our horses loose in the fields, pulled off our Pindaree boots and wadded coats, and having washed ourselves in a tank, walked like two honest travellers into the first village we came near. We learned there that war had commenced at Poonah between the English and Badjerao, the Peeshwa, and that the whole of the Deccan would soon be involved in confusion. We found also, by chance, that Trimbuckje Danglia was near the very village in which we then were, and we thought this a most fortunate circumstance, as we needed his assistance in our present destitute condition. He received us with apparent pleasure; but I thought he eyed me in a manner so singular, though I was at a loss to account for it, that I did not feel quite comfortable. He seemed to have forgotten the reward he promised for effecting his escape, and was in a very bad humour. The potail of the village had reported to him that an English officer with some men were arrived in the village, and Trimbuckje had given him orders to watch the strangers narrowly. The potail, however, thought proper to proceed to the officer's tent, surround it with several Bheels whom he had in his employment, and murder him in cold blood. He sent the head to Trimbuckje, who blamed the potail, and asked him who gave him power to kill the officer? The fellow made some excuse, and his offence was thought of no more.

After a few days spent with Trimbuckje, I asked leave to

proceed to the village wherein I had held the official situation. Trimbuckje answered that I might go to the devil if I liked, by which I well understood I had nothing to expect from him. Being anxious to see Sagoonah, I set off as quickly as I could, and in two days' time arrived at the place where I had left her. The house in which she had dwelt was standing, but its external appearance gave me but too faithful an impression of its forsaken state. The doors and window-shutters were torn off their hinges, and all was desolate. The reflexion that I could hardly expect to find my fair friends in the same spot where I had so long ago left them, prepared me in a certain degree for the disappointment I experienced. The state of the house, however, I could not pass over, as it evinced marks of violence exerted against it by other hands than those of time. Perhaps Sagoonah had been murdered! The idea that it was so began to haunt me; it made me feverish and restless. "Why, my lovely Sagoonah," I said a hundred times to myself, "why did I ever quit you? Why were you doomed to be so persecuted, and why am I for ever to suffer disappointment?" Thus I bewailed my lot, until my feelings became so excited that I was very near ending my days on the threshold of the house where I had once been so happy—over which she had passed or been taken lifeless; she who was the sole object that made me bear the multiplied calamities of my wandering life with patience, and who alone reconciled me to human

existence! I knew not what it was that prevented my carrying this desperate purpose into effect. It was some casual or passing thought, to which hope clung, that led me aside from the deep dark pit into which I was on the point of falling. It was not impossible Sagoonah might even now be alive, and be requiring my protection. I must live to rescue her from the hands of villainy again, and be once more repaid by her kindness and love. "I will live," thought I, "and search throughout India for one who is so linked with my own being."

With the foregoing idea in my head, and with a full heart, I repaired to the house of the collector under whom I had been formerly employed. I was informed he was asleep, and must not be disturbed. I then inquired if I could be informed what had become of my mother and of my sister? "Your mother and sister," one of the servants exclaimed, with a look that expressed he knew the contrary far better than I chose to suppose he did, "are not in this village." I told him I knew that as well as he, but asked where they then were. "In the first place," replied the fellow, "I can't tell, because I don't know myself; and in the second place, if I did, I would not tell, because"—— "Because," I interrupted, "because why?" The man significantly tapped his stomach, and then pointed to his mouth, signifying it was more than his place was worth to do so. I saw directly I should get nothing from him, and, sufficiently dispirited, I went away. When I conjectured the great man had

finished his sleep, I repaired a second time to his residence, and was told he was at his meals, and could not be spoken with. It was evident he did not want to see me, but still I determined to wait an hour longer. At the expiration of that time I again made my appearance at his door; and, that I might neglect nothing, I presented two rupees to a peon, begging him to give my name to his master, and inform him I wished to speak with him on business of importance. The peon went up-stairs, and soon returned, saying his master was engaged over papers of consequence, and would not be interrupted. This was proof sufficient to convince me that an audience was denied me, and that I might spare myself the trouble of any future applications for an interview. I felt persuaded that the collector himself had aided in the outrage which I apprehended had been committed. Passing by the chowkee, or guard-room, a little time afterwards, the fellow whom I had addressed on my first visit, beckoned me aside and whispered to me, "The sooner you are off the better." "Why?" I answered. He drew his finger across his throat, and said, "Be wise." I thanked him, and was about to ask another question, but he turned on his heel, and I saw no more of him.

It was now very clear that I must provide for my own safety. To what point I should direct my steps I knew not, but I wandered again by instinct, while considering the subject, to the deserted house where Sagoonah had lived. It was the evening hour. The interior of the building was dark

and gloomy; not one article of furniture remained in it save an old couch with three legs, upon which I sat to finish my meditations on the best step to be taken to solve the mystery that hung over the fate of my fair friends, and the cause of the desolation I saw around me. It seemed strange that the house should be so totally deserted; it was not in ruins; why did not some one inhabit it? why were its chambers left empty, be the fate of its former tenants what it might? Perhaps a murder had been committed within its walls, and it was shunned as a place of horrors; and who knew but the victim might have been my Sagoonah? This one moment I thought must be the case, and I even sobbed aloud until the bare walls echoed back my lamentations. I never felt so wretched. After a little time I recollected the caution of the man at the chowkee; and summoning the aid of reason, I descended the stairs with the intention of leaving the place, when I saw a light issue from under a door on my right hand at the foot of the staircase. What it meant I could not conjecture. "Some one must inhabit that room," thought I to myself, "and I will find out who it is, even if my life be hazarded by my rashness." With this determination I crept softly down to the door whence the light issued, and laid my ear close to it. I now heard whisperings and chinking of money, which made me think they were thieves who harboured there, and I judged that they could not be of that class of persons from whom I could learn anything to my advantage. With this idea I was going softly away,

leaving the house to its secret tenants, when the talking became louder, and I again listened, but could only hear disjointed sentences and scattered words, such as "money," "services," "Trimbuckje Danglia." It now struck me that if I knocked at the door, and demanded admittance as a traveller desiring shelter, I might possibly learn something of advantage to myself; I therefore gave a loud knock. The light was immediately extinguished, and I heard the chink of money very audibly. Not a word more was uttered; and fearing the persons might rush out upon me, I slipped into a recess at a little distance from the room they occupied, where I was well concealed at that hour of the night. I had scarcely got into it when a pistol was discharged from the head of the staircase, and a bullet passed through the outer door. Had I been in my former post, I must have fallen, and my fortune been at once settled for ever. I was now convinced there was more than one person in the house, or I should have immediately followed the man who fired. Uncertain of the number or force under the roof, I conceived it would be madness to move out. There could be no doubt the men, whoever they were, had a perfect knowledge of all the passages of the house, even better than I had. Notwithstanding, therefore, the danger I incurred in remaining longer, curiosity chained me to the spot until I saw a light flash from the head of the stairs. The person who held it was perhaps the villain who had fired. Seeing no one, I retired, and all was again still and dark. Soon

after I heard the voices again in the room below, and one of them distinctly say, "'Twas a false alarm, there was no one there; or if there was, he is there no longer." "No, no," observed another, "my shot sent him about his business; but we must not waste time here. Farewell! we meet again at Asseerghur." "Ay, ay," said the first, "there is work enough for us there." They then made their exit, by what means I cannot tell, but I felt no small pleasure at their departure. I looked into the street soon afterwards, but could see neither of them, which makes me imagine there was some secret passage of which I knew nothing. With an eager but faint hope that these men were privy to the removal or present situation of Sagoonah and her aunt, if they were indeed alive, I determined to follow them to Asseerghur, a very strong fort situated on an immense height of rock, which renders it impregnable; it is therefore considered the most important place of defence in that part of the Deccan. I left the village accordingly, and took shelter for the rest of the night in a cowshed, where I obtained a few hours' sleep, and in the morning set out for Asseerghur.

"Comfortless and hungry, I kept my journey onwards until I reached a small village, where I sat myself down in the durhm sallah, or place for travellers. There were two men within of most savage countenances, busied in lighting a fire to cook their rice. They appeared like myself to have only just arrived, and I having no rice to cook, had plenty

of time to examine the countenances of these ferocious-looking personages. No two men ever existed more unlike each other. The one was very tall, with a thin, emaciated face, enveloped in whiskers and mustaches, so that his small, black eyes and the tip of his nose only were visible, except when his mouth opened, and then a splendid set of the whitest teeth I ever beheld illuminated his gloomy countenance. The indices of age in man and horse convinced me that the object engaging my attention, though apparently past fifty, was in reality scarcely thirty. He wore a white coat, long white trousers, with a red shawl over his shoulders, and a black leather belt round his waist, in which were a brace of pistols. On his head was a dirty green turban, twisted in the form of a Madras nuthkhut's, or conjuror's, so that I was much puzzled to discover either his country or his caste. The other was a short, mean-looking villain, with no hair on his person save his mustaches, which were mere stubble, and of a very light colour; he was fair, and had two small grey eyes and a snub nose, with very thick lips and a miserable set of black broken teeth. A large scar on his forehead showed me he had been no stranger to broils, and knew how to fight his way through life. He had a red turban, which looked as if it had been daily worn time out of mind, without its being reformed or newly arranged since it was made. He bore a common kuttar in his girdle, but was encumbered with no other weapons. Previous to eating, the tall man withdrew the pistols from his girdle and placed

them by his side on the ground. By this time it was highly necessary that I should think about something to eat, for I was in truth almost famished. To have begged either of the tall or short man would, I could clearly see, be as idle as to beg of the stones under my feet. These men might perhaps have thrown me their scraps, which my caste would not admit of my accepting. I therefore required money, or if I could not obtain that, a little raw rice would have been acceptable. The short man seemed to have a good supply of this last commodity; and impelled by want, I ventured at last to beg the loan of a *jeen* of it, assuring him I would repay him when I reached my journey's end. He looked very hard at me, and then asked if I really thought he was fool enough to be cheated out of his rice by such a man as I was. "Repay me, indeed!" said he, "you know that must be a lie. Pray, in the first place, where is your journey to end, because we may be going different ways?" "Why," replied I, "my journey lies towards Asseerghur." "This means, I suppose," observed he, "that you are going to Asseerghur?" "Certainly." "Then what need was there of your saying your way lay towards Asseerghur? Do you think it likely I shall bestow my rice on one who equivocates so much as you do!" "He is a liar," observed the tall man; "give him rice, indeed! here is something would suit him better" (taking up one of the pistols)—at which the short man laughed most heartily. I began to augur that no rice would now fall to my share, and I sat suffering the torments

of hunger, until the two fellows had finished their repast. The tallest man having washed his mouth and cleaned his white teeth, approached me as I sat on a stone in the doorway, looking down upon me as he would do upon a reptile which he had half a mind to trample upon out of sheer wantonness. I did not dare to raise my eyes to gaze upon this formidable personage, but sat perfectly silent, suffering the keen pangs of hunger. After some time had elapsed, the fellow said, "Who are you, and what is your business at Asseerghur?" This was indeed a perplexing question. I knew if I told the real truth my life would be in danger, if these men chanced to be connected with Trimbuckje's schemes; and if I replied I had no business there, I should be looked upon with suspicion. If I made myself a person of no consequence, I should be despised; and if I made any pretensions, I should be deemed a liar with very good reason. Never did I before feel my nothingness so much as on this occasion. At last I ventured to say, "And who may you be that thinks yourself authorised to question another respecting his objects in travelling?" "Oh, what!" said the fellow in reply, "you are going to vapour, are you? You would make us believe you are a great man, would you?" "No," I answered, "I have no such design; I am no great man, nor am I quite so great a fool as you would consider me." "Poh," said he, "I don't know that—it is not very polite for beggars to be saucy." "Who begged?' I asked. "Did you not beg rice of us?" said he. "I re-

quested a loan," I replied; "which, had my request been granted, should have been repaid, provided we travelled the same road; but since you are so supercilious, pray keep your rice to yourselves. Keep away from me, I am not accustomed to associate with people of all castes." "What, impudent villain!" said the tall man, "do you pretend to be of a higher caste than a choomar?"* "I shall not dispute with you," I answered; "I know my caste, and how to preserve it unspotted." "Let us hang the fellow," cried the short man; "he will be a high caste fellow, a high caste Hindoo then, in truth."

* One of the very lowest caste.

This wit amused the two fellows greatly, and they prepared to lie down after their meal. They had endeavoured to provoke me into abusing them or striking them, and now, though they were both inclined to sleep, they indulged themselves in scoffing at me. The tall man said, "Hollo, you choomar, get out of the durhm sallah; no Hindoo will enter it if you sit on the threshold." "*Arry M,ha,raj*," cried the short man, "what is the matter?" "*M,ha,raj a che pōt b'hooh lāglē*," replied the other, meaning that his majesty's belly was hungry. They shouted with laughter at this joke; but I still sat silent, obliged to hear all and bear all with patience. They continued their jeers until they dropped asleep.

As soon as I was certain it would not awake them, I crept softly to the side of the tall man, and took up one of

his pistols to see if it was loaded; but what was my surprise on discovering them to be the pistols stolen from me by the Thugs, when on my way to Kandeish with Sagoonah! I knew them to be mine by a particular mark on the stocks. One was loaded, the other appeared to have been lately discharged, as the pan bore marks of powder having been recently inflamed in it; and the position of the lock proved my conjecture to be correct. Could these fellows have been inhabitants of the forlorn residence which I had left not long before, and where I was so nearly paying a high price for my curiosity? Perhaps it was my own pistol which had been fired at me, and the tall man was the person who did it. I became convinced I was right in my conclusion; for they said they were going to Asseerghur, or they should meet at Asseerghur. Perhaps only one of them was in the house, and he had been subsequently joined by the other on the road; that they were all united in one common league of interest appeared evident. I now laid down the pistols, and left the place in search of food.

CHAPTER XVIII.

I WAS reduced by hunger almost to the last extremity consistent with the power of action; and I succeeded at length in relieving my necessity by applying to the potail of the village, and pawning my turban to him for rice. Thus I was obliged to bare my head to satisfy the cravings of my stomach. Fortunately I had a wornout red shawl around my waist, which I transferred to my head; so that my appearance at present bespoke my real character, as to the state of my finances. I was now a mere *shack*—a penniless vagabond. My white coat was loose, for want of a *kumberbund*, and my head looked of an enormous size; because, instead of a neatly-folded turban, it was covered with my loose shawl, the end of which sometimes flapped down over my eyes. My beard had not been smoothed with a razor for many days; my shoes were worn out at the toes, and my trousers torn at the knees. Thus may some idea be formed of the wretched plight in which I appeared.

On returning to the durhm sallah, the tall man was awake, and sitting upright examining his pistols. "English," said I, alluding to their make. "Ay," said he; "and hard

work I had to get them. I should think I fought at once with four or five English troopers before I got them." "Four or five!" said I. "Ay, four or five!" he replied; "but I conquered them, and these are part of my spoil!" "You let the women go, then, I suppose?" "Women! how should you know there were any women present?" he rejoined. "I happen to know it well," said I. "Oh, then, you have met with one of the English troopers who got away?" "Not I," I replied; "I have met with no runaway Englishmen; they are not so often put to flight, as we know to our cost." "Then how could you know about the women?" he observed. "Why," I replied, "because I happened to know the women themselves." "So do I," replied the fellow. I then asked if he had seen them since; upon which he said he had a great mind to blow my brains out for my impertinence, and wondered how I could suppose him fool enough to answer my queries. I assured him I had no wish to pry into his secrets; and, moreover, I would assist his memory, if I could. "Why, you hypocrite," said he; "do you think I did not recognise you as the fellow who was with the women?" "Oh, then, you did not contend with five English troopers at all, I find!" said I. "Why, I must own that is a lie," he remarked. "Do you think, then, I did not recognise you as the man who forced my pistols from me?" "Ay, that may be," said he; "but I still think you lie!" "Well," I rejoined, "as you were candid enough to confess you had deviated

from the truth, I will confess that I had no recollection of your person; but I could swear to my pistols." "What! at this distance of time?" he observed. "Yes, my friend," said I; "because I examined them while you were sleeping." "You are, then, the most audacious vagabond I ever met with!" said he. I told him that might be; for, at any rate, I always possessed a good share of curiosity; which he told me to take care I did not pay too dearly for, some time or other. He then wanted to know how I came with the women, and if I was related to them. I replied in the negative, in a very careless manner, that I was only hired to protect them as far as Kandeish; and that, between ourselves, I had robbed them long before he enticed us out by making the birds chirp. He inquired if they never suspected me; and I said they did not, for they could not; as I could answer for it, they believed everything I ever said, even to this day. The fellow then observed, that now perhaps they were more wary. I said, that probably they were so now, since their fate had led them among strangers; and then as I recollected, I used to observe they were very suspicious; "but what now signifies it, my friend," said I, "where they are, or what they are?"

While the tall man was thinking what answer to make to this, his companion awoke. The latter evinced no little surprise at discovering his comrade in earnest conversation with me—the choomar, as he had, not long before, thought fit to designate me. The tall man then bid me cook my

rice; and he would talk to me again after my meal. I turned away, wondering where all this mystery would end, and from what cause this sudden civility arose. While cooking my rice, the two men whispered together in a corner, and appeared to be very earnest upon the subject on which they were engaged. The tall man was trying to persuade the short one to join in some new arrangement, and in so doing he encountered considerable opposition from his comrade. That their conversation implicated myself I did not doubt, both from the manner and tone in which they argued, and the way they occasionally regarded me. When I had devoured my rice, the tall man beckoned me to take my seat beside him. "My friend," said he, "we need your help in a difficult, and even dangerous affair. You shall be liberally rewarded, and shall succeed to some lucrative situation under Scindea's government"—— "That is," interrupted the short man, "if you are successful, and play no tricks; for you must beware of treachery towards us. Death will be your fate, if you attempt to deceive us!"

Having considered a little while, and urged by the hope of gaining a clue to the discovery of Sagoonah, I consented to enlist in their service, provided they would inform me of the true character of the duties required of me. I told them I demanded this not from motives of curiosity, because their business could not interest me in any way except in aiding in effecting their objects; that I entered their service from necessity and sheer want, and that I demanded these

particulars, and an account of the service I was going upon, and the individuals concerned therein: because, as I was to proceed by artifice and cunning, the least blunder might cost me my life; and even if I escaped evil from the party opposed to us, I might find it difficult to persuade those in whose service I embarked, that I was innocent of things they might impute to me—perhaps charging me with treachery instead of mere error. The two fellows now consulted together again, and came to a determination to confide to me the particulars of the business in which they were employed. They observed, however, that the place we were then in was too public for commencing a narrative of what they wished to communicate, and bade me follow them, and they would lead me to a retired place for the purpose, which no one knew but themselves. "Stop," said I; "how am I to be certain of being safe in your company?" "Dolt," said the short man; "what good will your death do us? Think you your old rag of a shawl and those handsome trousers are worth our killing you for? Here, take this pistol, and if we attempt to harm you"—— "Enough," said I, accepting the weapon; "lead on." They did so accordingly, and I followed. I asked the tall man his caste as we went along; he told me he was a Goud, and one of the twelve hundred horse that infested Souduana; his comrade was a Bheelalah, and both formerly served Trimbuckje Danglia, until they quarrelled with him about pay and left him. "That Trimbuckje!" said I; "he is a

most ungrateful villain!" "You know him, then?" was the reply, "and have suffered, too, from his ungrateful conduct?" "I am, in truth, a sufferer from him," I observed: "but for me he would still have been a prisoner. I effected his escape from Tannah; and, instead of rewarding me, he left me to beggary and want." "You would, then, like to be revenged upon him?" observed the tall man. "I should, indeed," I replied; "for I owe him a deep grudge." "You will have the opportunity, then," said the short man, who, till now, had been silent: "the very service we are engaged upon will, if we succeed, make Trimbuckje mad with rage; and not merely that alone, but will withdraw his attention from affairs of a more serious nature, and thus ruin him beyond redemption;—but we approach our secret halting-place."

My guides now led me a most intricate road, among hills, deep valleys, and impenetrable woods, until we reached a cave, wherein was an idol, such as I had never before seen, nor could my companions afford me any information respecting it. Behind the idol was a door, which opened by a secret spring. Through this door we passed, and, having reclosed it, found ourselves in a small square stone chamber. Here, then, was the place where my curiosity would be gratified, and I hoped to obtain tidings of Sagoonah. This chamber, I could clearly perceive, had been before inhabited by my companions, or probably resorted to by them when necessity compelled them to seek

shelter behind the friendly god. Mats, pots, pans, and oil, with lamps and cocoa-nuts, bespoke a secret haunt of desperate villainy. One of my companions lighted a lamp within; when we entered and seated ourselves.

Upon the present occasion, as, indeed, for the most part previously, the tall man was spokesman. He began by saying that, before he entrusted me with the motives that prompted both him and his companion to their present objects, and before he mentioned the name of their employer, it was proper to state that they had pledged their lives to perform the duty they had undertaken. When they first agreed to embark in this service, they did not apprehend the difficulties that now stared them in the face: and, in truth, circumstances had arisen which had contributed to thwart and counteract all their attempts. Chance had now thrown in their way the person of all others who could render them assistance, and that person was myself. He then stated that, if I succeeded in what I should have to undertake, I should receive two thousand rupees as a reward, besides employment under a Government where we should all enjoy lucrative situations. That it was not too late for me to decline the service required of me; and if I did so, I was at liberty to go away wherever I pleased; but if I behaved treacherously, my death was certain; they could be with me when I least suspected them, and escape would be impracticable. Here I signified I knew that was likely to be true, and that I was ready to do my best, but could not promise

success, as I did not know what was expected from me. "True," said my tall companion; "all we ask from you is fidelity, and a firm attachment to the cause you have undertaken to support. Accidents and disappointments may render all your attempts abortive in serving us; but nothing besides the most determined treachery can prevent your doing your best, and being secret and firm to the cause you undertake." I promised to be faithful, fully determined, if Sagoonah were involved in their objects, to thwart them by every means in my power. The shortest man of the two now bade me recollect that it was no trifling affair in which I had engaged, of which I said I was fully aware; and the tall man then told me that he and his companion were employed by Gunput Rao Mahadeo, the lawful successor to the musnud of Sattarah. I observed here, with some surprise, that I thought he had long ago bade adieu to the world, and having become a sunyassee, had never been heard of since; that he had a son also. They said he had, and that he was now in search of him, having had the most positive assurance of his existence. "He is alive," thought I to myself, "and there is little doubt but Mahadeo, the first Pindaree, is the son the father is seeking after." Of this, however, I did not say a word to my present companions, nor show any marks of surprise at feeling that it must be so. My informant now assured me that Gunput Mahadeo was alive, as well as his son, and that the father was searching for the son, to complete a marriage between him and a female, who, if united

to him, might be the means of elevating the father to the Government of Sattarah; and, after his death, his son also. "But how, my friend," I interrupted, "can an alliance with the girl raise both father and son to the musnud?" In reply, I was informed that "the uncle of the girl was at Sattarah, immensely rich; that the deposed rajah was imbecile, and for a good round sum would not hesitate to declare Gunput Rao his lawful successor to the crown; nay, in all probability, would resign the musnud in his favour before he died; or if not, he would, for a large sum, secure the throne to Gunput after his own demise; for money was his god, as it is the god of all feeble minds. Now, the uncle of the girl could raise a crore of rupees, if needful; and, distressed at the absence of his niece, he had had an interview with Gunput Rao, who prowled about in the habit of a gossein, and was reputed to be very skilful, and to render great assistance to those who consulted him. While asking advice of the gossein, the uncle little thought he was consulting the pretender to the throne; nor would he ever have known it, had not the gossein himself discovered the secret, at the same time promising to find the girl about whom the rich man was so anxious, and then to try and discover his own son, and marry them. Thus the girl would become queen of Sattarah, if the rich man would consent to the match. The latter was overjoyed at the prospect of seeing any one of his relations raised to govern a kingdom, and promised Gunput Rao, if he could discover his niece, to consent to

her marrying his son as a reward; and that he would spare no money or pains to raise him to the throne, which, after his decease, the young couple must naturally occupy. It appeared that Gunput Rao inquired by what means he might recognise the female of whom he should go in search; and he was informed that her name was Sagoonah,"—(here I could scarcely conceal the emotion this intelligence produced),—"and that she wore round her neck a bead-necklace, with a talisman, which the uncle authorised Gunput to open. The contents, he said, were three grains of corn, a small antique coin——'The coin was of copper,' the gossein observed. 'How can you know this?' asked the uncle. The gossein then related a story about the alleged murder of such a girl at Poona, and that every person there supposed she was actually no more, but that he knew the reverse to be the truth. The inquiry respecting her death, and the examination of her necklace, took place in the open durbar; and he himself said he saw the grains of corn and money. The uncle then inquired if he saw no writing contained in it? The gossein replied in the negative. 'That is fortunate,' said the uncle, 'because my wife, knowing the girl's father was ruined by some gosseins, feared Sagoonah would also become the victim of this class of persons: and therefore she enclosed in the talisman a written caution, warning her to beware of such people. Now, your present character is one best suited to gain admission to the girl, provided she has not been prejudiced by this warning: wherever she be,

I authorise you to force her hither, if stratagem fail. Of me,' continued the uncle, 'she has no recollection, nor her aunt either; and a letter to her would be most likely looked upon as a forgery.'

"Thus authorised, our employer was still of opinion that the warning against gosseins might have got into the hands of Sagoonah, as he recollected that the person deputed to open the talisman was her avowed protector, and that no time was to be lost in following his footsteps. He took leave of the uncle at Sattarah, and journeyed to Poona, where he employed a gossein to hunt out Sagoonah, and a man who accompanied her, named Pandurang Hàrì. The latter, if it was necessary, might be despatched out of the way; but Sagoonah and her aunt must be conveyed to the spot where we then were, and final orders would be given respecting them. By some unknown means the plan miscarried; and the gossein entrusted with its management was dangerously wounded, and lost all traces of the females. It was I," said the tall man, "who informed Gunput Rao's messenger where to find the two women, whom I recollected I had robbed near Kandeish, and that they were accompanied by a man whose person I could not describe on account of the darkness. There was also a second man, I supposed a bullock-driver, in company. After being robbed, I imagined they all went back to the village from whence we enticed them. You were the man, then, it seems, who accompanied these women. Are you Pandurang

Hàrì?" "Not I," was my reply, with boldness; "my name is Ramje Goobie. I was employed, about the time you mention, to escort the women to Kandeish. I believe they placed great confidence in me." "Who employed you?" inquired the tall man. "That I cannot tell you," was my reply, "because I do not know his name—I was well paid, however." "Do you think it was that Pandurang Hàrì, of whom I spoke before, who employed you?" "Perhaps it was," I replied; "but I have never troubled my head about it since. I was more grieved at losing my money and pistols than anything else." "But did the gossein ever catch the women?" "He never did, though he made many attempts; they were too well on the watch against the arts of that class of people."

"Having left the service of Trimbuckje," continued the last speaker, "I have been employed since by the gossein, who, though still in Trimbuckje's service, is his decided enemy. It appears that Trimbuckje having conceived a passion for this very girl, determined to seize her, and place her in his harem, and had given orders to that effect, when he was arrested and escorted to Tannah. The man to whom he issued orders for this purpose, was the collector of the village where Sagoonah resided. He obtained possession of the women by force, and has concealed them somewhere that none of us can discover; but we have strong suspicions they are in the fortress of Asseerghur. The gossein, who had actually been dismissed from Trimbuckje's

service, upon finding his plans differ so much from those of his master as far as respected Sagoonah, thought it would be still highly advantageous to himself to get on the same footing as formerly in Trimbuckje's family. Having been applied to, therefore, to aid his escape from Tannah, he acceded, and again entered his employ. The gossein, however, has never been able to find out where Sagoonah is concealed, and he has engaged us in the attempt to discover the secret. We have learned that there are two women in the fort of Asseerghur; but whether they are those we seek we should not know if we were to see them, our employer himself not being able to give us any very accurate description of their persons. Now, then, we ask you to enter the fort, see the women if possible, claim an acquaintance with them, and persuade them to accompany you from the fort. This must be achieved by bribery and artifice; and when done, you have only to deliver them up to us." "But is it likely," I said, "that Trimbuckje could get the women into Scindea's fort?" "Trimbuckje," said one of my companions, "is a great friend of Bassoo Scindea's, one of the generals of whom you may have heard, in the history of the Scindea family, as commanding large but insubordinate armies. This Bassoo keeps the women in close confinement, from which it will be your duty to release them." "Are there no orders to give him about the goatherd in the glen?" observed the short man; "he may as well"—— "Peace!" said the tall man; "we can manage that. We have no more work for

you at present, Ramje," said he, "but what you already know."

Much as I wished to ask some other, and to me highly important questions, I dared not do so. I only inquired, in the first place, the nearest way to the fort. They directed me to go through a thick jungle, and then across a plain, after which I should enter a second wood. On emerging from thence I should find myself in a deep glen, in which was a goatherd's cottage. This I was not to enter, but to proceed until I reached the open plain, when I should see Asseerghur at about three coss distance from the border of the glen. I ventured to inquire whether Gunput Rao, the employer of my companions, did not occasionally pass by the name of Gabbage Gousla? They asked how I knew this. I had a reply in readiness, and told them that when I was employed to guard the two women to Kandeish, my employer told me a person named Gabbage Gousla was to be particularly avoided, and that he was a gossein. This seemed to satisfy the two men; but they again declared that if I acted treacherously towards them, my life should pay the forfeit; and they asserted that the previous knowledge I possessed of the persons of the two women alone induced them to confide in me. My duty was to persuade the women I was a messenger from Pandurang Hàrì, who awaited them without the fort, but for certain reasons dared not trust himself within the walls. I ventured, without appearing too anxious to ask how Gabbage discovered his

son to be in existence. They informed me that a servant of Trimbuckje's, named Nanna, had fallen in with a troop of Pindarees, one of whom related his history, and, from the peculiar circumstances he narrated, Gabbage became convinced it could be none other than his son. I was much surprised at this piece of intelligence, as I was at the singularity of Nanna's relating the son's history in presence of the father. I wished much to discover how Trimbuckje had found Sagoonah to be alive, after understanding that her death had taken place at Poona; but I dared not put further questions, and left it to chance to gratify me with this important piece of information.

CHAPTER XIX.

My wallet being replenished, and ten rupees paid me in advance, I prepared to set out for Asseerghur. It may be considered certain that if I succeeded I had no intention of bringing the women to the place agreed upon, though I had made a promise of so doing. Yet I well knew the consequences that would follow this treachery, and that as long as I lived it must be in a state of perpetual anxiety and terror, lest either the meagre form of the tall man or the squab figure of the little one should cross my steps; nevertheless, I set off on my enterprise. While creeping through the small iron door for that purpose, I saw that a strong bolt was affixed on the outside, and as soon as I was clearly out and the door closed again, I drew it across into its place, and consigned the two men to a lingering and terrible death! There was no other egress from the chamber. They heard the grating noise that sounded their knell of destruction. They attempted in vain to open the door; they screamed, and were then silent for a time, then burst out into louder curses on my head and on their own folly. Then they quarrelled, and ended their altercation with deep and bitter

groans. Theirs was a horrible destiny—to be eaten up by famine, to waste into death! But were they not plotting against others? and those, too, far dearer to me than mine own existence? Was not my Sagoonah to be their victim? and were they not scheming mischief against the poor goatherd they spoke of in the glen—perhaps to murder him? These considerations, and the consciousness that to frustrate the schemes of such men by such means was fully justifiable, bore me up, and afforded me consolation in respect to the justice of what I had done.

Night had now come on, and I feared to enter the first jungle at that season, though I kept as near it as I could to avoid the groans and maddening screams that came from the cell in which my victims were immolated. I could not get beyond the hearing of them. At times I was almost tempted to go and seal my own destruction by unbarring the portal, the cries of suffering so softened my heart! When I recollected they were still men like myself, a chill of horror came over me; but reason after many struggles resumed her seat, and the memory of Sagoonah's security again fixed my tottering resolution. The owl and the bat flitting across my face, added to the impression of that terrible hour. The wild beasts howled in the jungle; once more I went to avoid them towards the cave, as I had done several times before, but the yells of the miserable captives drove me away. Again I reached the entrance of the outer cave, through which their groans echoed and almost palsied my

heart, and again I returned towards the jungles. At last I summoned resolution to fly from the damps of the frowning rocks, in which the cave was scooped, for ever, and to leave my prisoners to die. A friendly tree, as far off from the spot as I could venture in the darkness, gave me shelter in its boughs for the night from beasts and men, and at dawn of day I pursued my journey through the first jungle.

The entrance into such a place, and at so early an hour, was highly dangerous; yet I longed to remove myself as far as I could from the neighbourhood of the cave, and to get nearer Sagoonah. As I went along I shook the limbs of the lower kind of underwood, and disturbed the birds of prey roosting among them, that fluttered away with shrill shrieks. The roar of a tiger not far from me made me hastily conceal myself behind a large tree on the opposite side whence the sound came. A second roar appeared to be very close by, and I lost not a moment in ascending the tree before the eye of the savage should flash upon me. It was then the hour of grey dawn, rendered more obscure by the forest foliage; but I could still see objects very distinctly for some distance around me. I had not sat long on a huge overhanging branch, when two enormous tigers issued from the thickest part of the jungle in a violent struggle for some heavy body in which their fangs were plunged. They came directly under where I sat, and I perceived they were contesting for the body of a man that appeared completely lifeless. "Who could the unhappy

victim of these animals have been? where were they dearly united to him in life—the wife, the children, or the parent —who would never know his fate?" This thought crossed me rapidly when I saw the body between the two animals, which neither dared to feed upon for fear of his antagonist. They stood glaring frightfully at each other, then growling furiously, and lashing their sides with their long tails in the utmost rage. At last one of them went off, and the other appeared for a considerable time to be sucking out the blood of the unfortunate man; he then slowly left it, as if gorged to satiety with the fluid of life. The ornaments and part of the man's dress lay on the ground by the body, and I determined to descend and secure them, when I could do so with safety. It was with no little pleasure I saw the creature walk away into the dense part of the wood to take its repose, as is the habit of these animals in the day. I then descended from the tree and searched the body of the dead traveller, which had been sucked till it was dry and light; not a bone was touched, nor the flesh anywhere very deeply torn. I found what I searched for tied round the loins of the corpse; it was a silver waist-chain or *kurdoorah*, which I transferred from the dead to a living body. There were also two massy silver rings for the wrists, and a chain round the left ankle, which I secured with no great difficulty. I found no money upon the body at first, and I therefore concluded it might have fallen on the spot where the tiger first seized the unhappy man, a little distance off. I tracked

the place by the blood, where the progress of the traveller had been fatally arrested. There I discovered a red turban, shoes, and some other articles which had belonged to him; but above all, a bundle of letters or papers, which I placed in the folds of the turban, and planted the latter on my head, hoping to pry into their contents at some more convenient opportunity. I also found an hircarrah's staff.* This convinced me that the unfortunate man had been a courier in the service of some great person, whose correspondence I had a strong inclination to peruse.

Fearing to remain longer on that spot, lest I should encounter a fate similar to that of the hircarrah, or, what was worse, fall into the hands of the men whom I had bolted up in the cave, if any chance should effect their liberation, I pushed on through the jungle as fast as I could, and did not once venture to look behind me. Having gained the open plain, I sat down under a large tree, and there indulged my curiosity by examining the directions of the letters. What was my surprise to find two directed to Trimbuckje Danglia Behauder, at Poona! These I broke open directly, and one of them was as follows:—"To the illustrious, mighty, benevolent, and just Trimbuckje Danglia Behauder, the source of all justice, this letter from the friend of his heart Bassoo Scindea, killehdar of the world-towering fort of Asseerghur, conveys the melancholy news that the two females, Allaya Bhae and Sagoonah Bhae,

* A small javelin borne by couriers and messengers.

being guided by the star of destiny, have, by means unknown to the friend of the merciful Trimbuckje Danglia, unfortunately made their escape from the fort. In the hope of retaking the fugitives, horsemen have been despatched different ways, besides many hircarrahs and spies in disguise, to all parts of the country, who have returned without success. By the aid of Ishwur, this attached friend has determined to move mountains and to drain rivers, in attempting to find their place of concealment; which having done, an hircarrah camel, swift as the wind, shall be sent off to Poona to the illustrious Trimbuckje Danglia, to give him the joyful intelligence. May glory, honour, fortune, and wealth attend his footsteps."

Thus terminated the first letter, and thus ended my hope of finding Sagoonah at the fort of Asseerghur. Though I rejoiced at her escape, yet it was a sort of disappointment to me to have lost the only clue by which I could trace her footsteps, and to have all to begin over again. The second letter I opened began thus:—"To the beloved and most friendly Trimbuckje Danglia, the writer of this letter, Bassoo Scindea, gave, in a heartrending despatch, news of the escape of two females placed under his care; he now begs leave to remind his attached friend, that the captives, having been in the fort for two months, incurred these the following expenses, for which a *hoondie** from Poona, in favour of this firm friend, will be most acceptable.

* Bill of exchange.

	R.	Qr.	
Rice and ghee, from 1st kastick to the present date, for one captive, Allaya Bhae	15	2	63
Do. Sagoonah, rice only	11	3	0
Dhal, onions, carrots, &c.	6	2	75
Firewood	9	3	0
Two old beds, and mending one	20	0	0
Two mats, one old,	5	2	0
Tobacco for Allaya Bhae	6	3	0
Hookah	2	2	0
Red Sarry for Allaya Bhae	30	0	0
Chowley for ditto	10	0	0
Sarry green for Sagoonah, gold border	45	0	0
Chowley, red, for ditto	12	0	0
Shoes and slippers	4	0	0
Paid for servants and attendants, &c.	15	0	0
Rupees	195	3	38

"The hoondie for this account may be despatched as soon as convenient. Farewell."

I was much diverted by this "firm friend's" disinterested kindness, and the strong love of Bassoo Scindea for Trimbuckje Danglia. The latter would, had he been circumstanced in a similar way, have done precisely the same thing, and would have had as little chance of getting repaid as the kind Bassoo Scindea had now, especially since his letters had got into my hands. These accounts were no doubt base fabrications on the part of Bassoo; a very small part of these expenses was really incurred by my dear

friend and her aunt. There was also a third letter, addressed to a Brahmin, Succaje Punt, containing nothing that could interest me.

I now arranged my dress in the best way I could, and by the aid of the hircarrah's red turban, silver bangles, and waist-chain, I cut a very respectable appearance. I began to consider where I should bend my steps. I had now no business at Asseerghur, nor in any place in that direction. I wandered undetermined on, until I found myself in the second jungle, into which I entered with trembling steps. I passed through it without meeting with either tigers or men, and soon found myself in the glen described by the tall man. It was a place fitted to enact the most bloody and pitiless crimes in—in every respect a den for murder. On all sides arose lofty dark rocks, topped by the majestic peepal trees, the branches of which, meeting above, cast beneath them a darkness that one almost shuddered to be involved in. Torrents pouring down deep gulfs, rugged rocks, and broken masses of fallen stone, rendered it extremely difficult to find out the proper path, which continually wound around or between them. Having proceeded onwards for some distance, I saw a miserable cottage perched on a point of rock close below a wooded precipitous height, which I concluded must be that of the goatherd. I clambered to the door, and knocking, it was opened by a venerable aged man, who demanded my business. I apologised for interrupting his quiet, and begged he would allow me a corner of his verandah

in which to cook my rice, and give me a few sticks to light my fire. He pointed out a place to which he told me I was welcome, and I began my cooking, though I had much rather have had nothing more to do than to converse with the old man. As I proceeded he examined me closely, and inquired at last whence I came, and whither I was going, the old questions, which all the world seemed privileged to ask me. I told him my first destination was Asseerghur, but —— "But what?" interrupted the old man, in a sharp tone. "Why, nothing," said I. "Which means," observed he, "that you do not choose to inform me your reasons for deviating from your original intentions." "There have unexpected events happened," I replied, "which have prevented my going to Asseerghur. What these events are, my short acquaintance with you does not warrant me in disclosing." "I admire your prudence, my friend," he remarked; "in this world of misery, one has need to keep one's own counsel." "I intend to keep mine," said I, "I assure you." "Then I would advise you not to wear that silver chain so openly around your waist, especially as blood tells tales." "Blood!" I exclaimed. "Ay, my friend, blood!" he replied; "is it possible that you have stained your hands with murder?" "Indeed," said I, "you wrong me by the unjust suspicion." "Wrong you!" he observed; "it was but yesterday I saw that silver chain round the waist of an hircarrah of Asseerghur, and, if I mistake not, those bangles also; and now you wear them, spotted

as they are with blood! You also tell me you were first going to Asseerghur, and then that circumstances led you another way; I hope I am wrong in supposing those circumstances are robbery and murder." "You never were more wrong in your life," I rejoined; "I am no murderer." I then explained to him all the particulars of my witnessing the tiger scene, and of my picking up the ornaments of the man who was killed, and that I would give them to any of the relations of the poor man if I knew them, or should ever chance to meet with them.

There was an openness in my manner which seemed to please the old man, and he gave credit to my story; but advised me not to wear property so obtained in that open manner; it might be recognised by friends or relatives of the dead, and there were plenty who were always disposed to give the worst colouring to a circumstance of the kind, when I might have a hard matter to persuade them into a belief of my having uttered the truth, a tiger would be made of me, and plenty of guns would be levelled at me. I thanked him for his kind advice, and promised to be more cautious. Having now eaten my rice, I deemed it to be my duty to warn the goatherd of his danger, and of the means I had taken to screen him for the present from his pursuers. "It is impossible," he exclaimed; "no one is pursuing me, nor have I now an enemy in the world; I had once, but those times are past." Here he wiped away a tear from his eye, and seemed oppressed with the remembrance of some

heavy sorrow or bitter recollection. His appearance spoke care, blended with a manly firmness of character. I admired his countenance; and it seemed as if I was drawn towards him by some extraordinary kind of sympathy, some unaccountable partiality. Both of us appeared anxious that we should know each other's situation, and unburthen our miseries. This was so strong a feeling with me, that I felt unable to account for its arising so suddenly, and the reflection of treachery, or fear of mischief to myself, alone restrained me from unbosoming; yet, if ever I felt certain that my confidence would not be misplaced, it was at that moment.

The goatherd appeared very anxious to have the persons of the men described who were meditating the interruption of his peace, and perhaps conspiring to deprive him of his life. That either of these things was the real object of the men whom I had placed in durance, I could not positively assert; I could only state that his name and place of abode were mentioned in a very mysterious manner by the two men whom I trusted would be soon no more. By degrees, as the kind disposition of the goatherd unfolded itself to me, I related more of the conversation I had heard in the secret chamber of the idol, and I informed him of the plans of a man named Gunput Rao Mahadeo, the pretender to the throne of Satarah. On hearing this name the old man grasped my arm as if clinging for support, and then let his head fall on my shoulder as if he were insensible. In a

short time he recovered himself. The first words he uttered were, "Young man, you are in error, Gunput Rao is no more; or if he really exists, he is dead to the world." "Oh, then, you knew him?" I observed. "I knew him too well," he replied. Here he folded his arms, and remained perfectly silent for a considerable time; at last he exclaimed, "It is impossible—he cannot be alive!" "There is too much reason to believe that he has put on the garb of a gossein, and that he wanders about under the name of Gabbage Gousla." A heavy sigh from the goatherd interrupted me, and prevented my communicating further information respecting this mysterious person. "Young man, you have spoken the truth—Gunput Rao lives—I have myself seen him; but when we last met little did I think I entertained my inveterate foe within these walls!" "He has then been here?" I observed. "He has," replied the goatherd; "and, under the name of Gabbage Gousla, has partaken of my homely fare." He now described the face and figure of this arch-fiend so accurately that I did not hesitate in declaring him to be the man who prowled about in the garb of sanctity, and, affecting to have resigned all worldly affairs, aspired to a throne. "He shall not succeed, by Ishwur, and all the gods in the Védas," cried the old man, with an energy and vehemence that astonished me. He perceived my surprise, and instantly composed himself, saying, "Excuse my vehement behaviour, my friend; I keep you from your food. Eat, and then pursue your

journey; I will accompany you, for it indeed behoves me to provide for my safety."

The goatherd now retired into an inner room, and I went on eating my rice. It occurred to me that this old man was the brother of Gunput Rao or Gabbage Gousla, whom Mahadeo, the first Pindaree, supposed to be murdered, and by whose account it was evident he was the true and lawful successor to the Satarah musnud.

The subject appeared to be of a nature far too delicate for any individual unconcerned in the event to touch upon; but I felt deeply the sorrows and injuries this unfortunate old man had undergone, and probably was yet doomed to undergo. He speedily returned to me, having a wallet at his back, and a few brass pans and pots in his hands. I lost no time in accompanying him, and we bent our steps through the lonely glen. The shades of evening approached, and cast a melancholy gloom around. We had proceeded but a short distance from whence we set out, when I asked my companion whither he intended to bend his steps. "Dost thou ask from an impertinent curiosity?" said the goatherd. I replied, "No, believe me, I ask from an ardent desire to serve you; and would guard you from the secret attacks of your enemies, if accident should ever enable me to be so useful." "I believe you to be sincere," said he, "and we may meet again. If you should by any chance become acquainted with the machinations of the man called Gabbage, you cannot serve me better than by communicating them to me."

To convince the old man how anxious I was to do him every kindness in my power, I related the plans of Gunput Rao, or Gabbage, concerning the marriage of his son with a girl named Sagoonah. The old man groaned inwardly, but said nothing. I inquired by what means I could convey to him any information I might chance to acquire respecting him. He desired me to write to him under cover to Shewdhut Wanee, Indore. "Is it possible," I exclaimed, "you are going to such a distance?" "Necessity compels me," he replied, "for there alone can I now expect a secure asylum." "Should I be permitted to visit you," I added, "by what means can I gain access to your place of refuge?" "Take this small silver ring," said he, presenting me with one of little value, on which was engraven a dove encircled by the word "*sulamut*" (health, prosperity). Show it to a wanee near the Mota Tullas* in Indore; his name is Shewdhut. He will conduct you to my place of abode, provided my enemies allow me time to retire to it in safety."

By this time we had entered the plain, about three coss only from the fort of Asseerghur. The old man now inquired my intentions, and whither I proposed travelling. I replied that I had wished a short time since to enter Asseerghur; but now that those whom I sought were no longer within its walls, I did not know where I should direct my steps. "Whom do you seek?" said he. I

* Great Tank.

replied, "Two unfortunate women." "How dost thou know they are not now in the fort?" I stated that I had read the despatches of the killehdar to Trimbuckje Danglia. "Those despatches contain the truth," said the goatherd; "the two women are really fled. Six nights ago, at the hour of twelve, my cottage door was assailed with a violent knocking. I arose, and demanded why I was thus disturbed, and a female voice begged me, in most moving terms, to admit two unhappy women, whose lives depended upon my acquiescence with their wish. I could not be deaf to such an appeal, and ascertaining that they were alone, I opened the door and let them in. They called blessings down upon my head for my kindness to them; and, in the course of conversation, I learned that they had fled from the fort of Asseerghur. One was a very young woman, the other more advanced in years. The face of the latter I could scarcely see, and that of the former not at all, it being carefully veiled. I informed them that it was but too probable persons would be despatched in quest of them, and that if they were found in my cottage, ruin would fall upon us all. They told me that they intended to pursue their journey as soon as possible, and requested a small supply of raw rice, which I presented to them, at the same time urging a longer residence under my roof, or at least until morning dawned. They acquiesced in this arrangement; and when I arose in the morning, I found they were gone. This includes every particular I am acquainted with respecting

these females and their escape, nor do I know whither they directed their steps."

The goatherd, hinting that no time must be lost in effecting his security, turned into a narrow path, and bade me "Farewell." As we parted he said, "We may meet again; if we should not, remember thy promise to convey to me any intelligence thou mayest think can be of importance to me." After his departure I stood several minutes in silence, reflecting upon the old man's conduct; and at length I sauntered on, dissatisfied, I knew not wherefore, towards the fort of Asseerghur. As matters had now turned out, and the women were secure, I repented seriously the having immured the two men in the secret chamber of the cave; I could have easily satisfied them of the escape of the two women, and have convinced them of the reality of the circumstance, when they would have agreed that I had done my best. They being satisfied of this, would have rewarded me, and let me into more of their proceedings, wherein I could either have aided or counteracted them as I thought proper.

I now began to think I could not do better than return and release them. It was but two days ago that I had immured them, and they could not in so short a time be starved to death, having, as I knew, rice sufficient left to last them at least for that period of time. Yet, what would be my reward for emancipating them but certain death for my treacherous intention of destroying them. To retrace my steps, therefore, for the purpose of setting them free, in-